

THE

RED



DIAMOND

The official publication of The Society of the Fifth Division, United States Army.

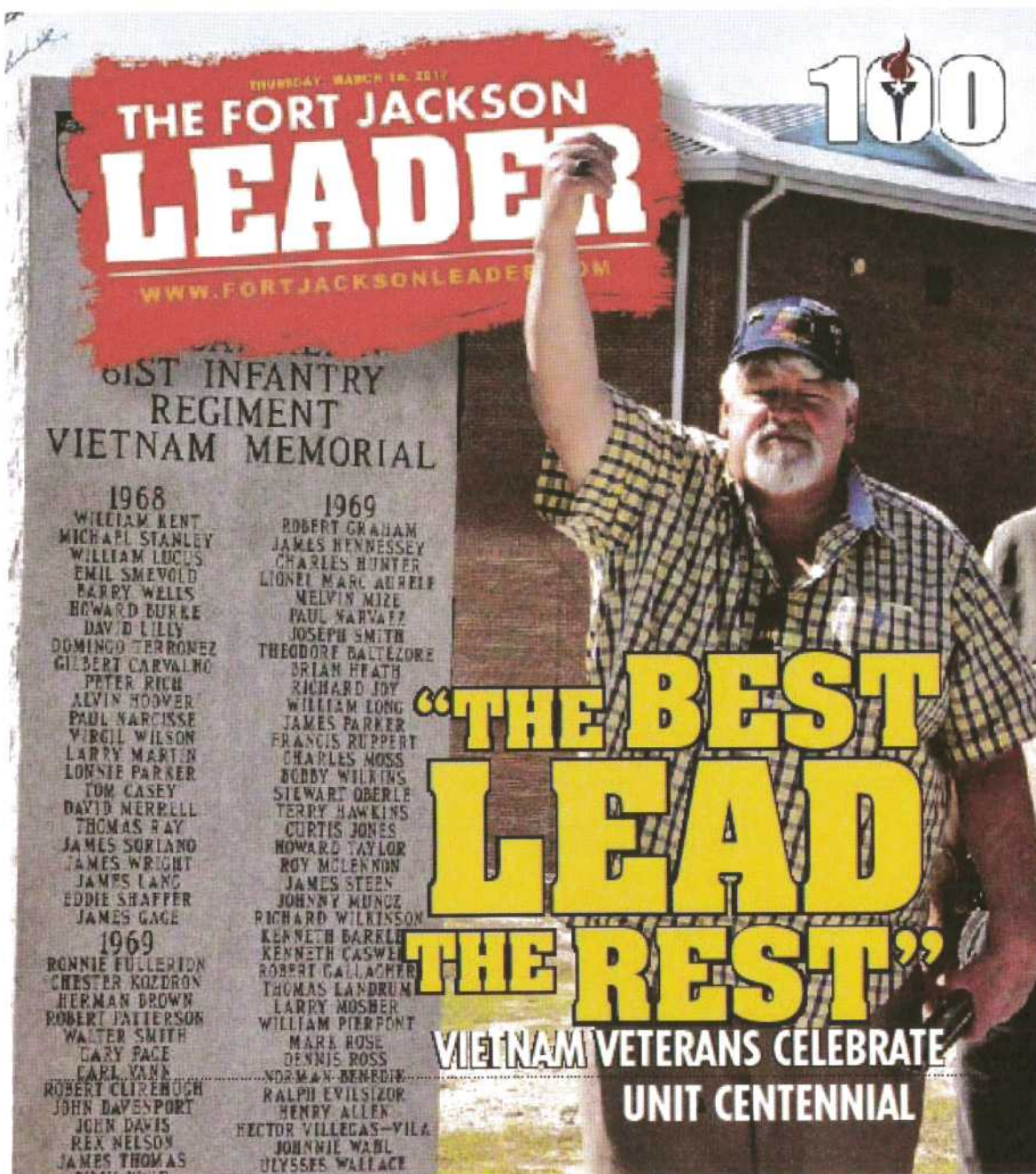
Volume XCVI, Issue 2

May 2017

Annual Dues: \$15

1/61 Infantry Battalion 100 year Reunion

Ft. Jackson, SC



Deadline for next issue: June 15, 2017

2015 – 2016 SOCIETY OF THE FIFTH DIVISION OFFICERS ROSTER FEBRUARY 2016

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

A. To perpetuate and memorialize the valiant acts and patriotic deeds of the Fifth Division; to electrify and unify that invisible current of fellowship, friendship and comradeship molded in the throes of war and the exigencies of a peacetime service, and promote the interests and welfare of its members.
B. To publish and preserve the history of the accomplishments of the Fifth Division and the Society, in war and peace, and set forth the gallant and heroic deeds of its members.

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- *Maj. Gen. Hanson E. Ely (1919-22,24-25)
- *Col. Philip J. McCook(1922-23)
- *Dr. E. C. Morton (1925-28)
- *Maj. Gen. Paul B. Malone (1929-30)
- *Capt. Peter Murphy (1930)
- *Maj. Walter E. Aebischer (1930-32)
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- *Col. Henry Clay Bate (1937-38)
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

BOB DUDLEY CHARLIE BATTERY, 5/4 ARTILLERY 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION (MECH) May 2017

It has been a busy few months since the last Red Diamond came out. To say the least, the last edition was fantastic – kudos to Steve Wheat for putting together another great magazine reflecting what is happening in the Society. I also appreciate all the members that submit articles for inclusion in the magazine. It can only be as good as what we provide to Steve. I mentioned in that edition that there was a planned reunion in Angers France this coming August commemorating the liberation of Angers by the 5th Division in August 1944. The Historical Military Vehicles organization in Angers was planning to hold events over a period of 3 to 4 days, ending on 10 August 2017 in Angers. Unfortunately that has been put on hold by the organizers in France. I will let everyone know if and when it is reinstated.

In March the 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry hosted a reunion and 100th anniversary celebration at Fort Jackson, SC. We had 39 Society members attend this great event. This old artilleryman was honored to be invited by our 1-61 brothers to attend. Events included a memorial dedication to our Roadrunner brothers that were killed in Vietnam, a dedication of a sign in the Alpha Company area commemorating Stan Coker's heroic actions near Laos where he was awarded the Silver Star, and a presentation by Robb Robertson to the current Alpha Company commander and 1SG of a replica of the company's sign that was in Quang Tri. Thanks to the 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment – specifically the battalion commander, LTC Mike Whitney; and the command sergeant major, CSM Chris Ausbun for sponsoring this great event, and to Pedro Marzan for doing much of the work organizing both the reunion and the KIA memorial.

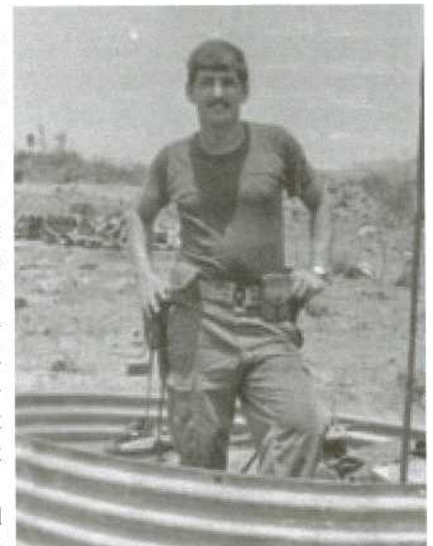


A note of thanks to our National Treasurer, George Shoener, for the outstanding work he is doing. We had the annual audit conducted and everything reconciled. All payments were supported by receipts; propriety of disbursements were reasonable; funds

were properly accounted for and were necessary; and disbursements were reasonable and necessary. The Audit Committee included Gary Barard, Henry Neill, Mike Sperling, and Dennis Thompson. We are lucky that Gary is a professional auditor and developed an excellent audit procedure SOP that is now part of the Society's Best Practice Guide.

It's May and almost time for the reunion. Most all details are finalized and Pat and I are looking forward to a great time with all of our 5th Division comrades. As I mentioned in the last Red Diamond, we have a full weekend planned with tours of Kansas City and of the National World War I Museum and Memorial. We will also present the 50th Vietnam Commemoration lapel pin to those Vietnam era veterans who have not yet received one. As some of you may have seen on the Society's Facebook page, The Huffington Post ranked Kansas City as the most exciting, "it" city in the United States. The food, mid-western hospitality and music were all highlighted as reasons to visit the metro area. If you have not signed up to attend yet, please visit our website at [Http://societyofthefifthdivision.com](http://societyofthefifthdivision.com) and register. As I mentioned in February, I did an analysis of expenses from past reunions and the Executive Board and I believe the costs this year are in line with previous reunions. I also had the Representatives at Large participate in our January Executive Board meeting so numerous members have provided excellent input for the reunion and have vetted the plans. Please complete your registration as soon as you can. Remember to request a handicap accessible room if necessary.

Pat and I are looking forward to seeing everyone in Kansas City in September.



First Vice Presidents Message: 1/61 REUNION

On March 7 through March 10, 2017, 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment based at Fort Jackson, South Carolina hosted a reunion of Vietnam veterans who served in 1/61. This reunion is held every two years. 1/61 is now an Infantry Basic Training Regiment commanded by Lt. Col. Michael T. Whitney along with Command Sergeant Major Christopher M. Ausbun. The unit is attached to the 165th Infantry Brigade commanded by Col. Thomas J. Sheehan.

We had the opportunity to attend Basic Training Family Day Ceremonies, Graduation Ceremonies, repelling from Victory Tower and the Infantry Museum at Fort Jackson. A monument was dedicated to the soldiers of 1/61 who were KIA in Vietnam. The Cadre were very gracious and a good time was had by all.




Monument for PFC Stanley Coker

We also attended the Ceremony honoring one of our own, Pfc Stanley W. Coker, Company A, 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry and the placement of a permanent monument at Alpha Company, home of the Gators.



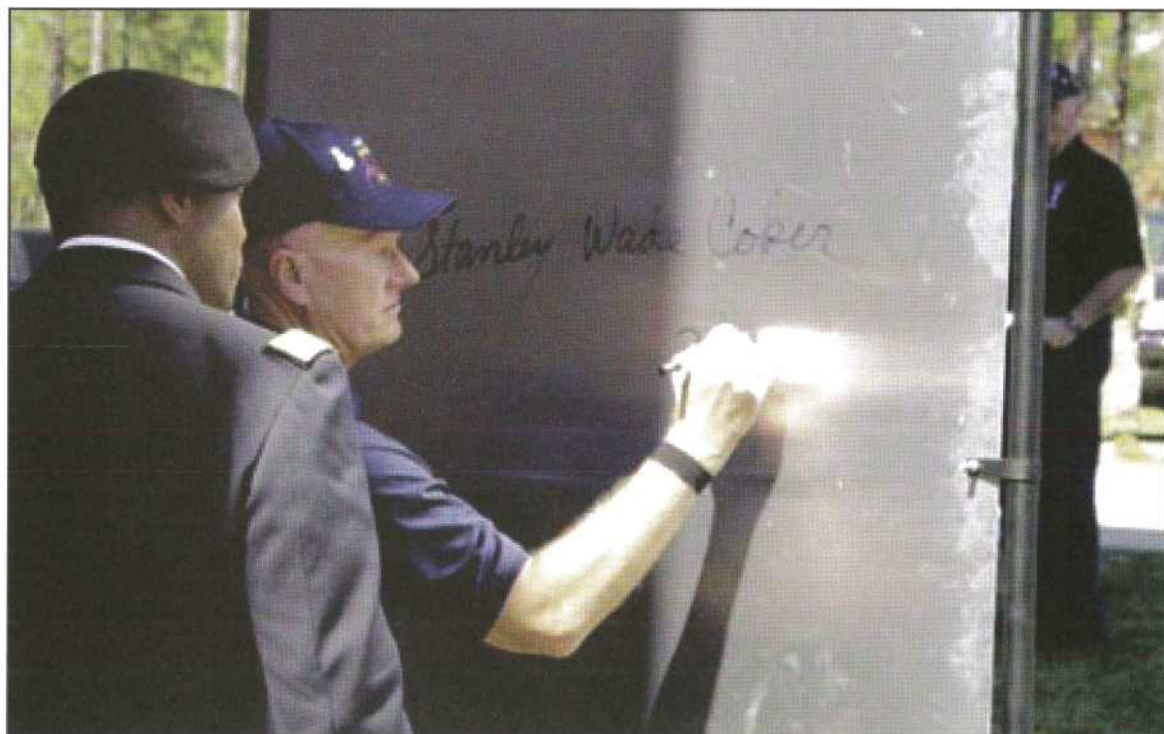
The Monument reads:

For Gallantry in action while engaging in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. Private First Class Coker distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry on 20 March 1971 while serving with Company A, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 61st Infantry during combat operations near the Laotian Border in Northern Quang Tri Province. The Second Platoon of Company A was moving in column to reinforce the Third Platoon when they were suddenly ambushed from the rear by an estimated company of North Vietnamese Army Soldiers. Private Coker was acting as track commander when his armored personnel carrier was struck in the rear by a rocket propelled grenade, starting a fire and wounding two men. Taking immediate action, Private Coker braved intense hostile fire to pull the two wounded men out of the burning track. He carried one seriously wounded soldier and assisted the other wounded man across an exposed area to a protected position. The burning track was blocking the road and it was impossible to provide adequate security for the vehicle without endangering the lives of other personnel from further enemy actions or from the track, if the munitions inside were to explode. Realizing the track would have to be moved, Private Coker again subjecting himself to hostile fire, ran back to the still burning vehicle and climbed into the driver's compartment. Although the munitions inside could of exploded at any minute. He succeeded in driving the burning vehicle out of the contact area to a protected position where the fire could be safely extinguished. His heroic actions unquestionably saved the lives of the two wounded individuals and reduced the danger to other personnel who would otherwise have had to provide security for the disabled vehicle. Private first class Coker's conspicuous gallantry in action and professionalism under enemy fire were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army. Seeing the monument and hearing the verbiage read was very emotional. For his actions that day Stanley received the Silver Star. Congratulations Stan Coker.

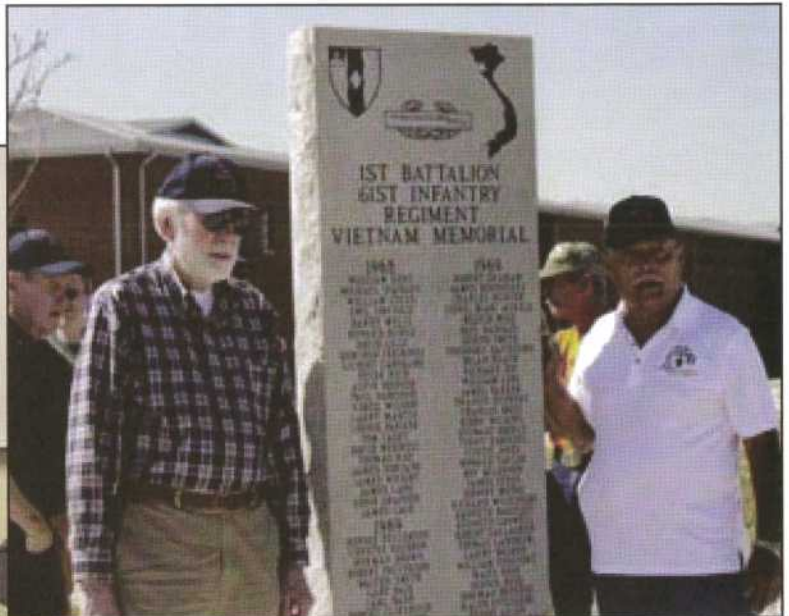




PFC STANLEY W. COKER
COMPANY A, 1ST BATTALION, 61ST INFANTRY

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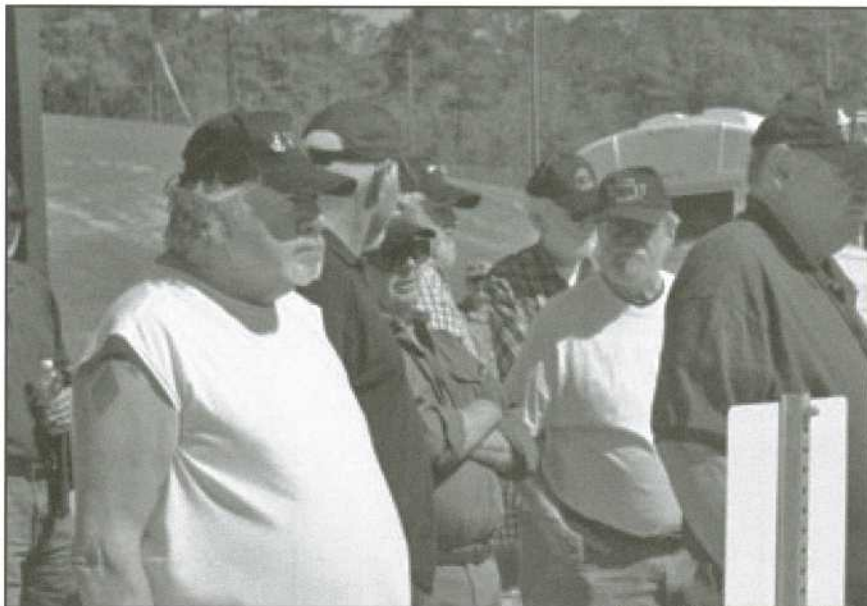












Second Vice President Introduction:

Let me introduce myself to those that do not know me. I am Alex T. Candelaria, 5th Division, U.S. Army 1966-69. I was born in the State of New Mexico and graduated from high school with a 1A draft classification. My father wanted me to attend college right out of high school.

My dad an Iwo Jima USMC veteran, and two uncles who served with the U.S. Army during WWII (one in the Battle of the Bulge and the other served in the Pacific all the way to Japan as part of the U.S. military occupation forces) were my biggest role models and still are. I and all my male first cousins were raised with the idea that when our country is in need, the men in our family do not wait to be drafted, WE ENLIST!!! I wanted to join the USMC but my father forbade me unless I graduated from college first. Then I could enter the military as an officer. So how would I obey and respect my father and still serve my country when it needed me. I beat the draft and did not join the marines, I joined the U.S. Army. My father did not agree with my decision but respected my decision to enlist. I figured my father never forbade me to join any other branch of service.

I attended boot camp at Fort Bliss, Texas. I scored well on all testing and was offered the opportunity to be promoted from private E-1 nothing to private E-2 nothing if I agreed to attend OCS. Being all of eighteen years old I knew everything or so I thought. So decided OCS would be just fine with me. I received my E-2 promotion, went on leave and afterward reported to Fort Ord, California for pre-OCS infantry training along with forty other guys. It was exciting for this small town guy to be in big California. Seems like I may become an officer just like dad wanted me to after all.

I learned to love the M-60 and was awarded an expert rating. Yes I thought I was bad! During my last week of Pre-OCS training I realized I was doing good to wipe my own a.. (wet nose) and through the mercy of God was sent to a four week clerk school because I was the only one who knew how to type. (I took a couple of typing classes in high school to be with all the girls). Does this mean I get out of the grunts? Not necessarily son, you will probably become a clerk for a grunt company.

Once again The Lord was looking out for this naive young punk. At the end of the four week clerk school the instructor asked the class if anyone was interested in attending Pay Disbursing Specialist School. I hesitantly raised my hand and asked him to explain what that was. He said pay dispersing was a pay clerk school. Does that mean I get out of the grunts? Yes if you complete the course. I volunteer! Get me out of the grunts! I will go! Got out of Pre-OCS and completed general clerk school, went home on leave for 1966 Christmas. First of the year 1967 went to Pay clerk school at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis. Arrived while it was snowing. Three months later graduated and left while it was snowing. I was ordered to my first permanent duty station in Oakland Army Base, California. I arrived in Oakland Army Base to beautiful warm California weather, Haight Ashbury, Berkeley, flower children, bikinis with girls every where, lived off base with three other pay clerks, partied most every night, and OTHER STUFF of the 60's. Being young, dumb and full of life I truly lived each day like any other eighteen year old male full of testosterone. I worked with civilians paying troops returning from Vietnam.

Late 1968 received my orders to Vietnam. First Sergeant, I

know that you are aware of the contents of my 201 file (personnel file). Am I going to Vietnam as a clerk or as a grunt. Well son your orders state you are going as a clerk. HOWEVER, I have been in this mans army for many years and the army will do with you what it deems most important. Oh s..t! I am going to be a gunner. Not necessarily son but you are being sent to a combat zone and expert machine gunners are at a premium. Went home on leave.

After leave reported to Fort Lewis Washington to catch a flight to Nam. First stop was some place in Hawaii. Got off the plane with the other 200 or so soldiers and entered the airport as about 200 marines entered from the opposite side. Within seconds the cat calls between both military branches began going back and forth. Very quickly soldiers and marines were about to have an out all brawl. An army and marine command Sergeant major walked in between this gang of 18/19 year old physically strong, manly and rugged individuals. Command presence and two very loud voices immediately silenced all 400 of us. Both Command Sergeant Majors informed us within a few short weeks each of us would soon be caught in a war to the death and would be returning home in body bags. That shut down all of our bravado. You could have heard a pin drop. Weeks later there were many times all you could hear was your heart loudly beating while trying to stay quiet.

Next stop Guam. Air strip full of B-52s surrounded by the jungle. Plane refueled and took off. Next stop Vietnam. Arrived Camranh Bay 1500 hours. Everyone hand over any American money in your possession in exchange for military pay script(monopoly money). What is military pay script? It is the money used by American Forces while in Vietnam. This will have to be exchanged for new MPC (military pay certificates) every six months so that the enemy is unable to access American money and or military pay certificates to purchase weapons and ammo. Well I have no green backs on me but I do have a 1943 silver dollar that I did not turn in. To this day I still have that silver dollar.

My orders were to go to Quang Tri. I asked where that was but no one would answer either because they did not know or they had their own matters to be concerned with. At 0400 hours the following day I boarded a C-130 that would take me to unknown places of violence, putrid smelling air, water buffalo, green things flying very fast in one direction and red things doing the same thing going in the opposite direction.

The C-130 traveled down the air strip what seemed to be two or three feet then flew straight up only to later land like an hawk from on high diving straight down to attack his prey. But in this case it was to quickly land on a tarmac air strip pulling up at the last second to level out in order for a safe landing. Planes did not have the luxury to come in on a long smooth landing pattern due to being shot down. The rear door of the C-130 goes down, duffle bags are pushed out and soldiers are running off the plane. The C-130 does not stop as it turns around and takes off again to its next destination. I thought during my first landing that the air craft had been shot down. How many more days to DEROS? Never going to make it.

Left Camranh Bay stopping off at every air strip leading up north. I asked where is Quang Tri and no one would answer. Finally one of five guys in faded fatigues returning from R&R said "you poor SOB you are the last one off of this plane". You go any further

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north and you will be in North Vietnam. We landed in Dong Ha (USMC), took a deuce and a half... through the jungle and saw hundreds of civilians carrying their life belongings walking in the opposite direction I was headed. My first thought was this is just like a John Wayne War Movie. It did not take long to realize one is a movie and the other is the real thing.

Very soon I realized the refugees were leaving where I was going. Oh s..t.!

Arrived Camp Red Devil and reported to a Captain. He told me and the other three FNGs that even though we were pay clerks, drivers and personnel troops we would go on short patrols with the grunts and that none of the grunts wanted us near them. In the grunts eyes we weren't trained, tested and nor were we an asset to them. We would get them killed. Boy did I prove them wrong! On one of my first OJT patrols I killed and I mean killed at least one million leaves on trees before I was ordered to stop shooting. By the time I stopped shooting at the enemy leaves I had gone through half a belt of ammo and had a very HOT white barreled M-60. My first experience killing leaves with the M-60 provided the training staff sergeant the perfect teaching opportunity to inform me in no uncertain terms to learn to control my fears.. Thank you Almighty God for getting me out of the grunts while back in the states.

My company commander was Captain Neill (Col. Retired). He attends most 5th Division reunions accompanied by his lovely wife, Judy. She gently informs me that Col. Neill is the true General in her life. I, having been highly trained by my wife and have learned to respond "yes dear" to her and any 5th Division wife. Seems to me all 5th Division wives have exemplified this and other highly skilled training techniques beyond any drill instructor! In spite of this training my wife has "told me" that I remain the man of the house...between the hours of 0100 and 0200 each day"! Smart women!

Captain Neill ran a well oiled machine as the finance officer. He even placed all of us on the ready reaction team when called to man the perimeter particularly when under fire (pot shots 99% of the time). But Holy Smokes, I have to admit battling escapee water buffaloes from their pens, mosquitoes, snakes, listening to millions of croaking frogs that lived in the rice paddies sure did interfere with getting a good night snooze. Talk about a target rich environment to shoot an M-60 !!! After all why let that expert M-60 rating go to waste? You have to maintain your expertise.

I remember one evening while on perimeter duty the bunker to our right opened up over the rice paddy because prior to sunset we had all been informed that a large group of enemy were headed our way. As dusk turned dark night those manning the bunker to our right heard splashing water and thought the enemy was making a wave attack while running across the paddy. First the rat tat tat of M-60 machine gun (the pig), then the pop, pop, of rifles and finally the thump, thump of the blooper M-79 grenade launcher. I popped a hand held flare and saw no enemy. None of the other bunkers were shooting. At first light, two water buffalo were observed laying dead on their side in the rice paddy. The guys in that bunker were made to pay the farmer for the two farm trackters they had killed.

Another evening I recall seeing three bright flashes across the rice paddy. I yelled out "in coming". One round hit near the per-

sonnel building leaving shrapnel in the wooden building. Some Lt. directed me to be his spotter as he was calling in artillery. First round hit 80 yards to our right. Second round hit right in front of us and finally the third artillery round hit where I had reported seeing the initial burst of fire. By that time Lt. got on target the enemy had gone home for the night.

My last couple of months in country were in the Mekong Delta. I and three other Red Devils drew the short stick and were transferred to the Delta. We continued as pay clerks and seemed like we were on permanent guard duty overlooking the Cantho airstrip. We guarded s..t hook helicopters, gun ships, medi-vacs and some jets from. We had a two hundred yard kill zone carved out by the bull dozers by knocking down the jungle. One evening sappers attempted to hit the base full of aircraft. Puff the Magic Dragon flew over one time and opened up. Fight is over. Nothing left but...well you know what is left after puff opens up.

The worst possible event for me while in Vietnam was when I and three others were guarding about fifteen to twenty VC Pow. A staff sergeant called me over to talk to me about re-enlisting and getting three to six thousand dollar re-enlistment bonus. I informed him that I had done my duty honorably and would not be re-enlisting. I was a short timer and my three years active duty were about up. I was already enrolled in college. I now knew why my father was hoping I would attend college first...hopefully the war would be over and I would be less likely subject to a violent death and as an officer I may have had a little easier life or maybe not.

I separated from the army July 1969, graduated from the University of California and worked to support my family. I began a career hooking and booking criminals. I became known as the veterans criminal expert because of my veterans knowledge and contacts with the Veterans Administration. I knew why Vietnam Vets were having so many problems thus would take them to the VA system on condition they stayed and completed the programs available to vets as opposed to incarceration. I figured if a vet is able to successfully address his PTSD, drug and alcohol problems, anger and marital issues it also helps his family to get stronger and make for a peaceful home life for all.

Besides known as a veterans advocate I also had several street names by the locals. In the barrios I was named "el cucuy" (boogyman), in the ghetto some called me "Santa Claus" because my beard had turned white with age. In other areas of the city and county I was named "crazy one" to include many other wonderful characterization of names that suited the times. Since I and about half of my colleagues were Vietnam Veterans working with other Law enforcement agencies not quite as worldly as we were, we were also thought of as a little "dinky dau". Actually we were just more experienced.

After undergoing a quadruple by-pass I retired. I have enjoyed retirement until my recent surgery to remove my right cancerous kidney. After five months I am finally feeling better.

That is my story and I am sticking by it.

Alex T. Candelaria
2nd V.P. SOFD

National Historian: Leigh Blood

1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Celebrates its 100th Anniversary

The bi-annual gathering of the 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry at Fort Jackson, South Carolina was an extra special event this year. This year is the 100th anniversary of the establishment of 1/61 and the Battalion leadership pulled out all the stops to make this week's gathering something to remember.

In addition to being treated as honored guests by the "Road Runner" leadership, we were treated to two extra special surprises. One surprise was the honoring of Stanley Coker for his Silver Star for his valor during Lamson 719. Look for separate article in this Red Diamond talking about this.

The second surprise was the result of a project spear headed by Pedro Marzan with support from the 1/61 Headquarters. At a special ceremony commemorating the 100 year history of the 1/61, we were treated to the unveiling of a monument honoring the memory of our fellow Road Runners who gave all in Vietnam. It was emotional for all us, as we took time to touch, to read their names and to remember. This is truly a great gift from the Road Runner Battalion.

The monument was given a place of honor by being placed at the entrance to the battalion barracks. Everyone entering or leaving the battalion area must walk past this memorial.

Credit and thanks should be given to Pedro Marzan. Pedro who usually organizes our bi-annual gathers took on this extra project and with the support of the 1/61 Headquarters successfully pulled together the resources and information for creation of this monument. Thank you Pedro. Well Done!

"LT" Leigh Blood A Co. 1/61



Editors Two Cents

A lot has gone on this past quarter, it seems 2017 has a strong tailwind turning the pages of my calendar faster than I can read them. The overwhelming positive response that the attendees of the 100 year 1/61 Infantry Battalion reunion at Ft. Jackson had is testimony to the power that a welcome home ceremony has on Viet Nam veterans. Going to our annual reunion and being with the whole Red Diamond tribe evokes in me much of the same satisfaction as they enjoyed. The recognition and hospitality given to our men who attended makes all Red Devils humble and proud. Thanks to all who sent in articles, if you don't see yours in this issue it will be in the next one. With spring here and summer fast approaching I will sign off for now and see if my dog pack has dug up all of my bamboo plants yet. Cheers y'all !!!

Steve Wheat

And yes, when I was a wee lad I watched "Combat" and while I was in QT around Christmas one of the actors walked up and started talking to some of us. His name was Ben Gazzra. What were the odds?



Does anyone know these guys?

As some of you know, I do not receive television service in the small town that I live in. The only alternative is satellite TV and until I learn how to bi-locate, 600 channels showing guys catching and interrogating alligators seems redundant. I do have internet so I watch Netflix movies. This winter I saw two movies with 5th Division references and photos. The first one is a documentary named "Dazzle" the story of camouflage. The picture of the Major below was used when discussing how to hide armored vehicles. Does anybody know him? Can you hide a tank?



The other cinematic wonder was a Netflix series titled "Ghost Whisperer". What's with all of the whispering shows can't anyone speak up for a change? It is a fictional story (who guessed that) about a lady who is visited by spirits of the deceased, in particular her lover, a fallen Fifth Div. soldier. There was quite a bit of dialogue about the Fifth Div. and RVN so I guess one of the writers has a link. Here is the picture. See the subdued Red Diamond.



1

A summary of the Fifth Div. in WWII

If anyone has doubts about the quality of history being taught in schools these days, then the following "Term Paper" may encourage you as it did me. The paper was sent to Leigh Blood our Historian who was the source for some of Kelley Henry's research.

Kelley Henry
Oct. 15, 2016
HIST 465

"We Will":

The 5th Infantry Division during WWII

Multiple theaters of operation, three countries making up the Axis Powers, nine countries making up the Allied Powers, a number of countries engaged in combat support operations, fighting by air, land, and sea using new weapons: This is WWII. Of the vast array of topics for study and discussion regarding the Second World War, the men who served their country during America's bloodiest war¹ should never be forgotten.

The 5th Infantry Division comprised a small part of those who fought their way through Europe. But just as the U.S. Army seemed to have overlooked "The Red Diamond Division" in Iceland, history neglected to make much mention of them either. Initial staging in Iceland's gale force winds and bitter cold, was followed by concentrated and demanding advanced training in England and Ireland. From the shores and fields of France, into the lion's den of Germany, and finally to the liberation of Czechoslovakia, the 5th Division made history. General George S. Patton may have been the most famous Third Army commander, but few may realize that the 5th Division fell under Patton's command and contributed to his success during the Normandy, Rhineland and Ardennes-Alsace campaigns. Without the 5th Division's participation in numerous battles and 25 river crossings that made up these military missions, Patton's Third Army may not have had the victories for which it is so well known.

The 5th Division was organized and activated during the First World War. Identified by the unit's insignia, a red diamond patch worn on the uniform's sleeve, the emblem came to be a symbol of the unit's action. The red diamond "cut into the battle line," "sheared off the salient", and "became the point of an arrow" that pierced through various engagements of the war, and thereby gave the division its name². Although the division had a number of successful campaigns during WWI, following the war's end the unit was deactivated. After 18 long years of existing only on paper, the unit was reactivated on October 16, 1939 at Fort McClellan, Alabama³.

The 5th Infantry Division's composition included a headquarters, military police, and signal company, three infantry regiments, artillery battalions, an engineer, quartermaster and medical battalion, as well as a reconnaissance troop⁴. The men constituting the division were both volunteers as well as Select Service men⁴, and would face a number of training tasks following activation. After completing basic training, they continued with intensive maneuvers

1 America's Wars.

2 Historical and Pictorial Review, 5th Infantry Division.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

in Tennessee, earning praise from both war department observers, as well as officers from Second Army who conducted the maneuvers. The 5th Division was then called on to participate in the largest peacetime maneuvers in Louisiana to which they answered with their motto, "We Will"⁵. By the time their training and maneuvers ended in October 1941, the division had covered 5,000 miles with safety, efficiency and speed⁶. The 5th was ready and able, but for the time being had nowhere to go.

While the men of the 5th Division were busy training, America, Britain, and Canada were discussing what would become known as the ABC Agreement⁷. The agreement essentially outlined different strategies that would be taken in the event the U.S. entered the war. The subject of Iceland, in particular its defense, was included in the discussions. Iceland's geographic location was advantageous to Allied forces due to its position between Europe and the United States. German U-boats also found an opportunity to use this unprotected gap in The Battle of the Atlantic⁸ resulting in establishment of a staging base for Allied patrols in Iceland⁹. Since both the base and Iceland itself would need to be protected, it was decided the U.S. would relieve the British garrison established there, if the U.S. was forced into the war⁹. By May of 1941 the situation in Europe had changed and Hitler it seemed was primed to possibly start an invasion of Russia¹⁰. Realizing the U.S. may soon be entering the war, the president began arrangements for Americans to take over the British garrison in Iceland¹¹. Despite multiple set-backs in planning to include a debate on whether the 1st or 5th Division should be sent, by summer, the 5th Division staff was beginning preparations for embarkation¹².

The 5th Division began arriving in December 1941, replacing not only the British but also the 2^d Marine Division of the United States Marine Corps, which had been sent as an advanced party¹³. Upon their arrival, the 5th went to work improving their area of operations which consisted mainly of keeping their Nissen huts¹⁴ grounded. Iceland's overpowering winds had the capability of completely blowing the huts, and pieces of roof, completely off. To mitigate and prevent this, soldiers "banked them" by putting sandbags around the outside perimeter of the hut¹⁴. In addition, sandbags were hung by wire on the roof panels in order to weigh them down¹⁵.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Coordination with Britain.

8 Planning the Iceland Operation.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Outpost in the North Atlantic: Marines in the Defense of Iceland.

14 Oral History by Captain Richard Durst.

15 Oral History by Captain Joseph Rahie.

3

Besides building and improving huts, the 5th performed road work and spent a good deal of time participating in “dock duty” which consisted of unloading ships of supplies¹⁶. Unfortunately, Iceland’s weather conditions did not allow for much proper training. This fact, combined with cold floors, a lack of decent plumbing, electricity and poor light during the long winter months, all contributed to low morale¹⁷. As the U.S. officially joined the war shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and military campaigns were taking place in North Africa and Italy, the 5th Division still sat in Iceland feeling, as one soldier put it, like the “forgotten bastards of Iceland.”¹⁸

Sailing orders eventually arrived, giving the 5th at long last relief from Iceland. From October 1943 through July 1944, the 5th Division deployed to both England and Ireland for advanced training before heading to mainland Europe¹⁹. On a rainy day in early July, the 5th boarded a ship, as they had done previously, but this time they would step off into a combat zone²⁰. On July 9th they arrived at Utah Beach⁷ in France, 33 days after D-Day²¹. As soldier Charles Conway remembers, “When I came down the rope netting, I could see a pair of airplane wheels bobbing in the sea. I don’t know whose it was. The beach was littered with whatever was dropped from the landings, and from then on, What a mess. The dead had been collected, but that was all. I can still hear three 155 “Long Toms”²² blasting at some unknown target.”²² The 5th Infantry Division had arrived and hit the ground running, marching roughly twenty miles toward other U.S. allied forces and from there to Caumont²³. By July 26th they answered the call of their motto, “We Will”, and successfully launched an attack at Vidouville²⁴.

On August 4th, the 5th was assigned to Patton’s Third Army and began spearheading their way across France. Because the 5th Infantry Division had its own tank battalion and tank destroyer battalion, they had the advantage and speed of an armored unit, with the manpower of an infantry unit. Moving with the bare essentials, the 5th kept a pace of fifty to ninety miles a day with men piled into anything that moved: tanks, tank destroyers, jeeps, trucks and even captured German vehicles²⁵. Past Saint Lo, the first strategically important city to be captured by the Third Army was Angers. A communication and transportation hub, the city also housed a Naval Command Station which controlled the entire German Atlantic fleet, as well as a Gestapo headquarters and other command stations²⁶. A three day battle ensued with an Allied victory and

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 *Forgotten Bastards of Iceland*.

19 *5th Infantry Division*.

20 *The 5th Division in France*.

21 Ibid.

22 Charles Conway to daughter Christine Henry.

23 *The 5th Division in France*.

24 Ibid.

25 *The 5th Infantry Division in the ETO*.

26 Ibid.

4

then it was on to Chartres, the "Gateway to Paris"²⁷. Here, the men of the "Red Diamond Division" liberated Chartres while also capturing a number of supplies²⁸, to include German vehicles which would aid in the 5th Division's continued movement across France²⁹.

Pushing toward the Seine River, the 5th Division would see fast and furious action at Fontainebleau and Montereau. In true "We Will" spirit, the commander of 2nd Battalion wasted no time waiting for military assault boats and instead decided to use civilian boats to begin crossing the river³⁰. Though under fire, he and another officer were able to redirect German fire, enabling more men to cross and establish a bridgehead. It wasn't long before the enemy began to withdraw, the bridge was completed and the 5th continued onward to liberate Reims³¹.

Though previously faced with road blocks, the 5th Division had always found a way around them, but in late August 1944 their drive across France reached an abrupt halt: the Third Army was out of gas. As one soldier recalls, they had kept up at such a speed they had outrun the supply lines³². Although a seemingly funny situation to find oneself in, the situation had grave consequences. If the Third Army still had fuel, the 5th Division would have continued its monumental undertaking of keeping the Germans on the run. Instead, the Germans were able to return to the fortress city of Metz³³, rebuild their forces and defend the city³³. The Germans were also better prepared at the Moselle River and a bloody battle ensued. Victory finally came to U.S. forces after fierce fighting: had they not secured the bridgehead, Third Army would not have been able to cross the river and eventually take Metz.



27 Ibid.

28 The 5th Division in France.

29 The 5th Infantry Division in the ETO.

30 The 5th Division in France.

31 Ibid.

32 Charles Conway.

33 Ibid.

"The war memorial is dedicated to the heroic soldiers of the 5th U.S. Army Infantry Division who bravely held their positions after an arduous crossing of the Moselle River to fight for our freedom." - Photo of memorial in Metz, France.

When Metz was taken in November, the onset of winter had begun. Having spent countless cold days and nights in Iceland, the men of the 5th Division were not going to let a bit of cold stop their push into Germany. Arriving December 4th and capturing Lauterbach the following day³⁴, the 5th continued toward the Saar River. Third Army's mission there was to break through the Siegfried Line³⁵ and push to the Rhine, as other U.S. elements also attempted to crack the line both north and south of the 5th. The Germans, who were also no strangers to frigid temperatures, launched a full scale winter offensive on December 16th which would become known as The Battle of the Bulge³⁶. General Patton called upon General S. LeRoy "Red" Irwin and his Red Diamond Division to relieve the 4th Infantry Division, to which they answered "We Will"³⁶. On December 20th, the 5th Division halted their trek eastward and instead went north to face "the Bulge" in Luxembourg³⁷. Accomplishing the difficult task of relief under fire, they raced through 100 miles of rain, snow and mud in just 22 hours to meet the enemy³⁸. The 5th now had the onerous task of hurling the Germans back across the Sauer River and preventing Luxembourg City from falling into German hands³⁹.

Forging ahead, artillery rained down on the 5th and the sound of shells screaming filled the air as they took casualties during fierce fighting just before Christmas. Though the evergreen trees around them may have been reminiscent of the yuletide season, the Red Diamond Division had a long way to go before it could have, or hear, a "silent night". Often wearing sheets and other white linens donated by local civilians, the 5th made its way through the snowy terrain⁴⁰. A Christmas day gift came in the form of clear skies and the attack the following day had Germans not just on the run, but swimming the icy waters of the Sauer in order to retreat. As they entered their third January overseas, the Red Diamonds held the line along the Sauer until they would eventually cross over and enter into Germany⁴¹.

As the Ardennes campaign ended and the Rhineland campaign ramped up, January snow gave way to February rains which along with early thaws meant the Sauer's size had swelled. The 5th Infantry Division, although seasoned river crossing veterans, would face challenges as they made their sixteenth river crossing since their Normandy landing⁴². Facing high waters and a strong current the 5th said, "We Will." Knowing the strong defenses and fortifications of the

34 The 5th Division in the ETO.

35 Ardennes-Alsace.

36 The 5th Division in the ETO.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Operations of the 5th Infantry Division.

Siegfried Line awaited them on the other side, they said “We Will.” Fronting to a steep riverbank riddled with mines, artillery and machine gun fire, they said, “We Will.”

On the night of February 6th and into the early hours on the 7th the assault began. In rubber boats captured from the enemy, a crossing attempt by the 10th Infantry was made, but drew enemy fire from the other side of the river bank. A second attempt was made and through the barrage of fire and the river’s current, eight men successfully landed on the other side, making them the only bridgehead⁴³. The remaining 10 boats (out of 12) were soon lost to rough water or were sunk⁴⁴. These complications required a change in plans and by February 8, after adjusting fire, the crossing was underway with troops not only landing but pushing into the town of Weilerbach⁴⁵. As troops crossed via assault boats, engineers worked to construct a footbridge; efforts were futile as the river either swept away their progress, or enemy fire destroyed it⁴⁶. Supplies grew scarce and casualties began mounting not just from the enemy but from the water’s undertow as well⁴⁷. While other elements of the 5th faced similar problems, they also were finally making headway and slowly building a bridgehead. By the wee hours of February 9th supplies and ammunition were replenished and finally reaching the other side of the Sauer via boat. As opposed to returning empty, the boats carried wounded servicemen from the enemy occupied side of the river, back to the U.S. shore. By the fourth day of the assault, three battalions were pushing inland. Others continued to strengthen the bridgehead allowing supplies to be transported via a successfully completed footbridge. Due to the time consuming nature of carrying supplies by foot however, a tread-way bridge was soon under construction⁴⁸. The tread-way, constructed by large pontoon boats with a road-like surface, would allow for vehicles to drive on the bridge, thus increasing speed of all transported items. Four days later, the 5th Division had “paved” the way for troops, supplies, and armored units to cross the bridge over the Sauer River from Luxembourg into Germany. From there, U.S. forces would continue attacking towns that made up the formidable Siegfried Line⁴⁹.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

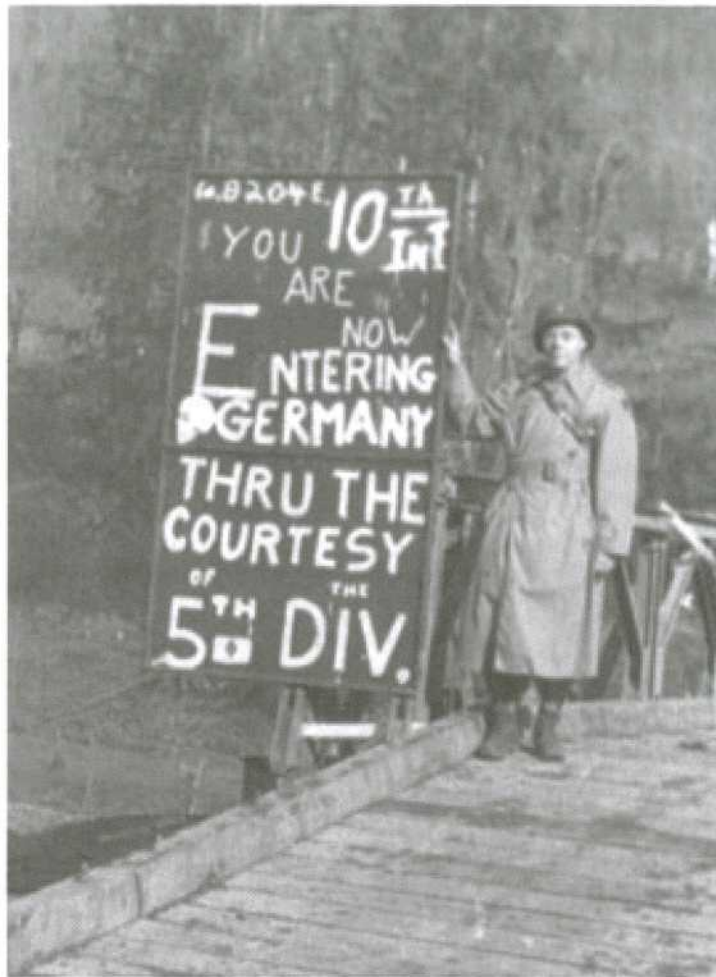
45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.



Lieutenant Colonel Charles Conway of the 5th Division stands with the sign erected by the 5th for their victorious labors. -Photographer Unknown

Now in the lion's den, the 5th continued driving toward the Rhine: crossing it would be their next momentous task. Plans to cross the Rhine had begun as early as August 1944 and would require mass amounts of troops and equipment to be gathered before the crossing⁵⁰. By March of 1945 Allied troops were aligned along the Rhine and final planning for the mission had begun. Operation PLUNDER was to be carried out on March 23rd by the British 21 Army Group commanded by Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery⁵¹. On March 19th however, General Omar Bradley told Patton he could proceed with an assault crossing of the Rhine as soon as possible⁵². Wasting no time, Patton sent for supplies that had been stockpiled in Lorraine for this

⁵⁰ Third Army Crossing of the Rhine River.

⁵¹ Central Europe.

⁵² Ibid.

very occasion⁵³. Realizing that he must have a strategic position, he concentrated efforts at Nierstein and Oppenheim, just south of Mainz⁵⁴. On the night of March 22 at 2200 hours⁵⁵ men of the 5th Division stealthily shoved off from the west bank of the Rhine River: the first assault crossing of the Rhine in modern history had begun⁵⁵.

Unlike their crossing of the Sauer, the 5th's silent crossing of the Rhine caught the Germans by surprise with seven startled Germans surrendering when the 5th arrived on the east bank of the river⁵⁶. The crossing at Oppenheim was not so quiet however as Germans, spotting the movement, opened machine gun fire on the intruders. The Germans surrendered as assault boats with men pouring out of them, continued crossing the river⁵⁷. As the 5th began entering the villages beyond the river, they were met with little resistance which was quickly snuffed. By mid-afternoon on March 23 all three infantry regiments of the 5th Division had crossed. As evening approached, a tread-way bridge was bringing more men, tanks, and equipment across from Third Army and other units⁵⁸. The 5th's crossing of the Rhine trail-blazed the way for the clearing of the Ruhr pocket of Germany, and in conjunction with other U.S. forces, the ultimate conquest of Germany itself⁵⁹.

Although the 5th Division pushed into Germany full force, it did not stop there. Its soldiers continued through Germany and onward, liberating Czechoslovakia before the war finally came to an end⁶⁰. Their service took them beyond the United States: to Iceland, the British Isles and from there forging ahead to France and throughout Europe. At every turn the brave men of the 5th Infantry Division answered, "We Will", and they did. More than just words, it was their way of life for the 270 days they were deployed in a combat zone. Their efforts in the campaigns above, in numerous incidents in between, and their 25 river crossings, made it possible for other units to follow in their path. Without the courage of the 5th Division, Patton and his Third Army would not have had the victories that are well known today.

In a letter written by Patton to the men of the Red Diamond Division dated November 17, 1945 he stated, "Throughout the whole advance across France you spearheaded the attack of your Corps. You crossed so many rivers that I am persuaded many of you have web feet and I know that all of you have dauntless spirit. To my mind history does not record incidents of greater valor than your assault crossings of the Sauer and the Rhine.

Nothing I can say can add to the glory which you have achieved."

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Third Army Crossing of the Rhine River.

56 Central Europe.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 The Fifth Infantry Division in the ETO.

60 Ibid.

I cannot say anything to add to their glory either. Instead, I can only hope that future generations will not forget the bravery of these men and the hardships they endured. And when asked to honor their memories that they would answer proudly, "We will."

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Please note that this link was intentionally not formatted to Chicago style. Formatting corrupts the link so it has been left in its original format so that it remains as a "hot" link. Also, please note that while the online copy is not entirely legible, I have a hard copy original in my possession.

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i Bloodiest war is defined as combat deaths, or deaths during battle.

ii Select Service refers to the Select Service and Training Act of 1940. Signed into law by President Roosevelt, it was the United States' first peacetime draft.

iii The Battle of the Atlantic was the fight from 1939-1945 to control naval shipping lanes in the Atlantic Ocean. The routes carried military equipment and supplies across the Atlantic.

iv Nissen huts were easily built buildings which consisted of a two by four floor, a metal frame, and metal sides and roof.

v Utah Sugar Red Beach is part of the Normandy beachhead.

vi 155 "Long Toms" refers to the 155 mm Gun M1. This nickname was given to the weapons as it had strong and long range of fire power.

vii Metz had a number of small forts surrounding it to include Fort Driant where a battle took place.

viii The Siegfried Line, also referred to as the West Wall, was a line of defense heavily fortified by tank traps and pillboxes (concrete and steel bunkers that often hid German weapons).

ix 2200 hours is a time on the 24 hour clock used by the military. The civilian time is 10:00 pm.

Swedish documentary filmmaker to attend Fifth Division Kansas City Reunion

From: Tom Grafton

Steve, Hope all is well with you. Here is a letter that I received from Fred Eklow. He served with A. Co. 7th Engineers in Vietnam. If you can could you please add this to "The Red Daimond". I send out a small newsletter to the 7th Engineers and will add it to the newsletter. Looking forward to seeing you and the rest in K.C.

Thanks,

Tom Grafton

To the Red Diamond newsletter.

I am a Swedish documentary filmmaker working on a film about a quite unusual Vietnam veteran story. We are following Fred S Eklow a Swedish citizen - born and raised in Stockholm that fought for the US during the Vietnam War. Fred did Basic training and AIT at Fort Jackson, South Carolina (January 1967) and was then assigned to Fort Carson, Colorado to join The Red Diamonds. In august 1968 he was initial deployed together with the 5th infantry division to Vietnam for a twelve-month tour.

The theme of our film is memories of war and what those memories do to us. Fred and the film crew are coming to the reunion in Kansas City, September this year and we are very interested in meeting up with anyone that might have heard of, met or known Fred ("The Swede") during his training at Fort Jackson and Fort Carson or met in Vietnam.

Also if you have pictures or film from that period, we'd very much appreciate everything you want to share with us.

Looking forward to meeting you all. Kind regards from the crew and me,

Valentin Bart, filmmaker

If you wish to contact me or the producer of this documentary:

valentin.bart@comhem.se

Georg Götmark, producer

georg@filmfront.se

Commemoration of the Liberation of Anger, France 10 August 2017 is On Hold

As noted in the last Red Diamond, the Society was contacted by an organization in France, VMH – Historical Military Vehicles – concerning a commemoration of the liberation of Angers by the 5th Infantry Division on 10 August 1944. Their plan was to hold events over a period of 3 to 4 days, ending on 10 August 2017 in Angers.

Unfortunately the VMH President, Edouard Callerot, notified me that the commemoration is on hold. If Edouard decides to hold the event, I will do my best to let everyone know.

The Orderly Room Sign lives on.

Past President Robb Robertson, a former Alpha Company 1/61 member presented a replica of the original A Co. sign (signed by members of Alpha 1/61 Vietnam 1970-1971) to the present day Alpha Company Commander Captain Frederick Mims (middle) and 1st Sgt. Brandon Cain (right). The photos below show Robb Robertson in 1970 standing in front of the original sign that hung in front of the orderly room in QT and now (left).



Back Then

And Now

My Brothers Have My Back

By Louis Pepi

continued

Chapter 2—Beginnings

My first recollection of being alone in the world to fend for myself was while sitting on a train at the depot in Clinton, Massachusetts, waiting to depart for the United States Armed Services Induction Center in Boston. We had been organized and led to and onto the train by a Marine recruiting sergeant. From the moment I met him he had been very friendly, polite and cordial, but as I boarded the train, I sensed that it would not be that way much longer. Of course, I had had friends who had been and were now in the service, and they had forewarned me. The specter of the abuse that I would surely have to endure over the next eight weeks really didn't bother me. I viewed it more as a game, but something else bigger hit home as I looked at my parents through the window. They had waved several times from the platform as the train lingered and their fortitude began waning a little each time they hand-flapped at me, until I could finally see the worry in their eyes blotting through. I was suddenly struck with an epiphany. I was no longer under the sphere of influence, and protection, of my family, instead I was now entirely on my own. A twinge of fear rose up my spine as I contemplated this, but that was rather diluted by the romantic excitement of the unknown. Little did I know that by the end of the day, I would be struck by a new and more profound advancement of this same epiphany, increasing in profundity with each stop that the train would make.

The track up ahead had a long curved bend in it and I actually saw the engine, at idle, diesel smoke lightly rising from its stack. When the diesel finally revved, I was looking at it. It started moving, first by itself, then there was a loud iron bang and the second car joined in the movement. This sequence continued and a loud clang announced the initial movement of each car, increasing progressively in volume and tempo as this phenomenon moved closer and closer to the car I was seated in. When it finally reached my car, the engine had already moved a full ten feet, and the jerking motion whip-lashed my head with mild violence. Had I known how the events of that day were to really proceed, I would have seen the progressive and increasingly more violent momentum of the train as symbolism of what was to come.

When the train pulled into the induction center in Boston, the Marine sergeant stood abruptly and barked some unintelligible words, yet we all stood immediately, fully understanding his intention. We moved in a rag-tag formation as he marched us into the building. We were totally out of step, each of us at least once, tripping over the heels of the inductee in front of us. Stopping in a large barren room inside the building, we stood for what seemed a small eternity. Then another Marine, this time a captain, walked through a door in front of us and instructed that we count off. We did this, and in doing it, found that we were one hundred fifty-five strong. He then instructed that every fifth man reassemble in a separate group to our left. My number was ninety-four.

"Those of you in the new group will be Marines and the rest will be inducted into the Army," he barked with a smooth but malicious tone. I was in the larger stationary group. Then he said, "In a few moments I will ask you all to take an oath of allegiance. Then I will ask you to take a step forward. When you take that step forward, you will cease to be civilians. If you refuse to take a step forward, we will take you in to the Battalion Commander, and you will have one more chance to comply. If you refuse, you will be clapped in irons and sent to Ft. Leavenworth Prison. It's entirely your choice men—military service or prison." He paused for a moment, and then said, "Raise your right hand and repeat after me:

As the officer spoke I repeated:



"I, Louis Pepi, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

We boarded the train again, with small carry-ons and the bag lunches we were given at the induction center. Shortly, the steel wheels rattled monotonously toward Fort Dix, New Jersey. It was late March and one of the first warm days of the season. As the train rolled south, the advance of the spring season progressed with it, and by the time we entered New Jersey, the trees were bursting with buds. Again, I sensed this latest scene as a metaphor signaling a change in my life. The train moved through, as most train lines do, a rural wooded countryside, seeming somehow to avoid the frequent urban centers of the northeastern corridor, which themselves were only occasionally visible in the smoggy distance. It was a special train, for it only stopped a few times in Providence, Rhode Island, somewhere in Connecticut and New York City to pick up more inductees, before it continued on to Newark, New Jersey. There, we were transferred onto a fleet of buses, for the final push to the training camp at Fort Dix. Little did we realize the firestorm, or so it seemed then, that we would walk into as we disembarked from the buses at the barracks of our training unit, our new home for the next sixteen weeks.

Chapter 3, Fort Dix—April to July, 1968

As we entered the army base—it was late in the evening—it was brightly lit in a very surreal way. We passed row after row of barracks, situated neatly on a maze of parallel and perpendicular streets, positioned in such a way as to create giant flat square drill fields, forming the back yard of each full block of buildings. Each barracks was lit front and back by flood lights and it rather had the look of a maximum security prison. Each window seemed to be dimly lit, indicating that there was a lonely light burning in the recess of almost every room. Not a sole stirred and the movement of the bus seemed to cause the only disturbance in the silence that was everywhere. Then, as the bus slowed and turned a corner, a specific building stood out from the others. It was much more brightly lit. It seemed that every possible bulb in the building was turned on. As the bus pulled to the curb, it slowed to a stop. Where it stopped a row of smart looking soldiers stood perfectly aligned at parade rest. All wore sergeant stripes and donned the typical "smoky-the-bear hat" of a drill instructor. As the door opened, two large search beacons that were situated behind the row of "spit-shined" soldiers were switched on and blinded us all in the bus.

One of the soldiers jumped through the open door and began screaming at the top of his lungs some of the foulest language I have ever heard. The gist of his crude ranting concerned what he would do to us physically and anatomically if we didn't all get off the bus immediately—or even sooner. I was struck by the sheer simple perfection of the grammar and composition of this foul tirade. An English Grammar Professor would even have seen it as a perfectly composed sentence with subject, predicate, participles and all various modifiers in perfect order and syntax—so well constructed that he would not even view the sentence as hyperbole, but actual instructions to be followed to a tee under the specter of gruesome and grotesque corporeal and bodily consequences. We all jumped up like coiled springs and pushed through the narrow door like a herd of stampeded cattle, only to find the other drill instructors waiting just outside the door of the bus forming a gauntlet, slinging at us and hacking with every possible rank term of belittlement, as we passed by. It seemed uproariously comedic in a twisted sort of way that they could say all this—and with straight faces—and this caused a dim smile to form on my face. That was a big mistake.

"Something funny, shithead?" one screamed so loud that his voice cracked.

"Nooo ----," I began, not smiling anymore.

"Shut up, Puss Nuts," he screeched in another broken scream.

"Gimme that sissy bag of yours, Pea-brain!" I held it up to him. "Get at attention," he yelled." I stiffened. He grabbed it and flung it back at my head. I flinched slightly and jerked my arms up to catch it. "I said attention, Piss-brain," as he yanked the bag back and threw it at me again. Again I flinched and caught the bag. "This piss ant is disobeying a direct order," he screeched louder than I imagined someone could yell. "Now attention," he barked as two other spit shined soldiers moved along side and held my wrists to my side. His third assault caught me square in the nose, causing a small trickle of blood that dripped on the ground between my feet.

"You're soiling my clean drill field, worm." The two soldiers released me, but I remained at attention thinking: So this is the game. *O.K. I can play it.* The drill instructor's eyes softened almost imperceptibly and it grew silent for a moment. Finally, the sergeant reached into his back pocket and pulled out a clean smartly folded green handkerchief and tossed it to me. It hit me lightly in the face and fell to the ground as I remained still. A little smirk blossomed on the corner of his mouth as he walked away, "Clean yourself up recruit."

Basic training consisted of all of the usual aspects of basic training. We were taught to march in step and we practiced every day on the drill field. Conditioning was grueling—one mile or better runs every day, push-ups, sit-ups and the rest of the daily dozen as well. We were issued M-14s and we learned to field strip them and put them back together in our sleep. Then there was the obstacle course and the infiltration course at night with live fire machine guns and exploding TNT in sandbagged craters. After a period of familiarity with our weapons, we double-timed to the range every day for live fire shooting practice. I excelled at this—being a deer hunter since I was a young boy. At age 17 I owned my own 30-06 bolt action and I was very familiar with the techniques of accurate shooting. That's not to say that I did not learn a wealth of additional information on the subject.

Then they taught us bayonet training and fighting with pugil sticks. The terms are imprinted in my mind.

"Parry and thrust".

I even still remember all of the required dialogue as well from the first day

"What's the spirit of the bayonet, turd? Sargent Luff yelled."

"I don't know sir."

"Don't call me sir, shithead. I work for a living."

"Sargent, I don't know Sargent."

"You don't know? Are you stupid?"

"Sargent, no Sargent."

"Then answer me."

"I don't know Sargent", I howled at the top of my voice.

"Turd, the spirit of the bayonet is, 'Kill—kill—kill! Say it."

"Kill—kill—kill, Sargent", I screamed.

"So help you....." Sargent Mikulka chimed in, waiting for me to add the final word.

"Sargent, so help me God, Sargent".

"No puss nuts", Mikulka screamed. "So help you BAYONET". He screeched the last word so loudly, his voice cracked and cut out briefly.

"So help me bayonet", I bellowed even louder.

Then Sargent Wilson jumped in, "And when you have some VC Gook good and skewered, how do you get him off dirt bag?"

"Sargent, I kick out and yank back Sargent"

"No pea brain. YOU SHOOT HIM OFF."

"Sargent, I SHOOT HIM OFF, SARGENT."

And on and on it went. I'm sure it ended up with 50 push-ups. Oh, excuse me—*applying pressure to Fort Dix New Jersey 50 times.*

The grenade range was for the most part uneventful. Only one trainee dropped a grenade and it was picked up and tossed away safely by

Sargent Mikulka. I believe that poor guy suffered a little that day with quite a few applications of pressure to Fort Dix and maybe a mile run, but that was it. There were a few screw-ups on the obstacle course which just caused repetition for the whole group each time but that was just a little teamwork practice thrown into the mix. And finally, the live-fire infiltration course went smoothly. The classes were tough because it was hard to stay awake but the classroom training ran its course as well.

Finally, we began double-timing to the range for live fire. As I said, I excelled at marksmanship with the M-14. In AIT we were issued M-16s and shot expert with both.

The rest of Basic & AIT was uneventful. Two hundred twenty trainees graduated. I was promoted to Private E-2 out of basic and then PFC soon after leaving AIT. I was approached for Officer's Candidate School but I refused because I thought I might have trouble sending men to their death. I decided to be a follower. Subsequent to the advice of Sargent Luff though, I signed up for DI School as did Jerry Heinemann and we were issued orders for drill instructor training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Prior to that though, I was issued two weeks leave and returned to Massachusetts for a short vacation in my home town of West Boylston.

Chapter 4—52nd Ordinance Company—July 1968 to June 1969

Fort Campbell was a bust. When Jerry Heinemann and I arrived at the Replacement Company, we were told that DI school was filled up. Instead, we would be assigned to the 52nd Ordinance Company to be part of a guard detail for a special weapons stockpile. The 52nd Ordinance was actually at Clarksville Naval Base which was an annex of Fort Campbell. At the replacement company we were told that we'd be lucky to be at the 52nd for a month before we were levied to Vietnam. All I could think was, "Fucked by Uncle Sam again."

Without any choice in the matter, I took my orders and checked into the Naval Base. The barracks and other accommodations were better than any I had seen in any Army facility anywhere so far. If this lasted for a while, it might not be too bad, but I was told it wouldn't. The first order of business at the company headquarters was to be cleared for a Secret Security Clearance because of the nature of the Ordinance I would be guarding. While I was waiting for my clearance I was assigned to barracks cleaning duty as well as all-purpose spit-shine detail. This wasn't too bad either, because there were about a dozen other new guys also awaiting clearances and assigned the same duty. It was obvious that this was going to be a "spit & polish" type unit—totally STRAC. The first two guys I met were Chris Martin and Dennis Shine—both from Worcester, Massachusetts—which was a moderately sized city adjacent to my home town. What a coincidence, I thought. There was also John Crutchfield, Joe Lehner, Don Rich and Tony Steerman—southerners who turned out to be great guys. Within a short time, we formed an inseparable group, augmented by the fact that we were assigned to the same guard team. We were also all promoted to PFC.

Chris Martin was the social director and orchestrated the comings and goings of the group. He had enlisted under the buddy system with his hometown best friend, Dennis Shine. Dennis was a soft-spoken gentleman who was also a little naïve. Chris was his protector.

Depending on our guard schedule, one evening each weekend was spent at the Marine EM Club, and although there was common respect, there was also the occasional tussle. Whenever the Marines messed with Chris it was a mistake. And if they messed with Dennis it was an even bigger mistake because Chris would jump in. Once a pair of Marines decided they were going to push Dennis around a little just because he always displayed that vulnerable look. Chris knocked one Marine to the ground and the other was pinned across the bar before they knew what hit them. You didn't mess with Den-Den when Chris was around. Shine was married and the father of two infant children. He enlisted in the Army on principle and to fight for his country. He was really a fish out of water in an infantry company—he was just a gentle soul. Chris enlisted—I believe—to take care of Dennis. Chris was eventually shipped to Nam and served with the Americal Division. During his tour, he was awarded a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and an

ARCOM for heroism along with three purple hearts. He came home and went to work for the Post Office in Worcester, Massachusetts. His route was on Main St and you could always find him walking his beat in the busy business district stopping from time to time to hold court for his endless flood of friends.

Dennis was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division and lasted barely two weeks in the Thua Thien area of the Southern I Corp. He was killed setting out a mechanical ambush—he simply blew himself up. Chris always regretted that he wasn't with Dennis in Vietnam and carried that weight with him his whole life. The Babe Ruth League in Dennis' neighborhood named their ball field after him. Today, the scoreboard displays in large block letters: **Dennis Shine Babe Ruth League**. His grave stone sets in St John's Cemetery. He died on August 19, 1969. His unit was C Co, 2ND BN, 506TH Infantry, 101ST ABN Div. He was awarded the Purple Heart.

I attended Chris' funeral in 2010 who died of cancer and I met his son. Vietnam got him in the end. He was one hell of a guy. Tony Steerman had these words to say about Chris in his guest book:

I served with Chris at Ft. Campbell Ky. and in different battalions in Viet Nam (same division) I have wondered for years where he was and what he was up to. My first son was named after Chris. I have pictures in my album of us together near Chu Lai. I have always told my kids that he could walk into a room with 100 strangers and every one of them would assume that he was in charge.

Don Rich and John Crutchfield were best of friends in the same way as Chris and Dennis were and Tony Steerman and Joe Lehner rounded out the sixth and seventh persons in the group. Eventually all of us were shipped to Vietnam. I have never reunited with Rich and Crutchfield, but I have not given up trying. I found Tony Steerman about four years ago and we converse regularly by email. He still suffers from a service connected back injury. I plan to meet him face to face at some time soon.

As it turned out, my time at the 52nd was much longer than a month. As a matter of fact, as the spring of 1969 rolled around, I had less than a year to serve to complete my debt to Uncle Sam, but he eventually got me again by levying me to Vietnam with a scant nine months left before I was due to be discharged. The odd thing was that this levy coincided time-wise with President Nixon's planned troop reduction that he had promised to the American People. On the levy with me were all the close friends I had made during my one year with the 52nd.

We did have a slew of good times at Clarksville base. Guard duty consisted of twenty-four hours on and forty-eight off with every other weekend off. It was a spit and shine outfit. There were two entrances to the special weapons depot and the lab that disassembled nuclear warheads for disposal. The Marines guarded one entry point and the 52nd Ordinance guard detail secured the other. There was a continual flow of high ranking brass that we had to stop and ID at the entrance corridor. The generals always tried to walk on by the guard detail claiming their rank precluded them from showing an ID. We always detained the generals because we were warned that letting them walk by unchecked would be a court martial offense. In my eleven months at this duty post I never ventured into the depot or the lab—neither did any other enlisted man or NCO of the guard detail to my knowledge—thus I could only accept the rumors as to the nature of the weapons I was guarding back then. I have found out recently that the rumors were true.

On off days, we spent a great deal of time applying shoe polish and Brasso. We also spent a great deal of time at the range. We fired for score with the M-16 twice. I scored a 26 & 28—good for second and first place the company. We qualified with the BAR—expert again. Finally, we qualified with the 1911 45 ACP pistol. There was also a turkey shoot before Thanksgiving with the 45 Auto and I was awarded third place.

There was an inspection nearly every day that we weren't on guard detail. Demerits were easy to accrue if you were slack. I received demerits once and it cost me. One particular morning, prior to a company inspection I was getting my shit in order at the last minute when I realized that I didn't have a pair of polished boots. Neither did anyone else have an extra polished

pair. I had no choice but to put on a scuffed pair. Lieutenant Terry gave me a demerit and I was sent to the Company Commander. The old man asked me if I had an explanation and I said that I didn't—which was the wrong answer. The result was an Article Fifteen. The next week everyone in my detail was up for promotion to corporal. I remained a PFC and didn't get promoted to Spec Four until September of 1969 in Vietnam.

There was one notable series of occurrences at the 52nd Ordinance. Like I said, we were always at the range and we all were mindful to find ways to smuggle live ammo off the range to use in a little game we were planning as payback for precious Marine pranks. The live ammo that was passed out for guard detail by Lieutenant Terry every day was counted and recounted at the start and finish of each shift. The 5.56mm was emptied out of the magazine, counted and then reloaded. The same process was carried out with the .45 Auto magazines too. Then the gun safe was checked. The cartridge count always had to be exact. It took about six weeks but Chris and I managed to squirrel ten rounds of .556mm from the range. It involved lying to the range officer—"No Brass—no ammo, sir". That was another court martial offense.

Several weeks later, the time was right and Chris and I were on the graveyard shift—midnight till 0600. Steerman, Crutchfield, Shine, Rich and Joe Lehner were sound asleep. Our Euchre game with Lehner and Steerman broke up at midnight when we replaced Shine and Crutchfield on guard. It was now 0300 and Chris said it was time. We had already loaded five rounds each of our ammo stash into empty magazines. We took the twenty round clips out of our weapons and locked and loaded the fives. Chris nodded and we walked outside and got into the jeep to make the hourly rounds. Out at one of the angles of the security fence there was a clear view of the Marine detail that was making their hourly rounds too. We slipped out of our jeep as planned and eased the muzzles of our M-16s through the chain link fence.

"Aim about five feet over that Jarhead jeep", Chris whispered. "That way the rounds will fall harmlessly into the rifle range."

"OK", I responded, "One, two, three. Fire!"

The night silence was broken by our hail of fire. In less than five seconds we were back in the jeep. I drove the jeep while Chris was already field-stripping his weapon. As we pulled up to the guard shack, the four others were awake at the door in their skivvies. They knew exactly what had just happened and they all had wide grins. Chris jumped out of the jeep cradling the pieces of his field dressed weapon and I threw mine to one of the others. Within three minutes both rifles were patched, oiled, reassembled and reloaded as Lt Terry was beeping at the gate. We walked out and let him in and told him that we heard the shots too outside the security fence but he didn't believe a word we said—or rather what Chris said—because he did all of the talking. Besides, he was the Corporal of the Guard. Terry went back to the guard shack and counted and recounted the ammunition for two hours to no avail while the other four guys shot billiards. He eventually called the Marine lieutenant who said that his Marine detail had backed up our story about the shots coming from outside the security fence. Chris smiled about that after Terry left. The Marines detail knew what really happened and we knew that they knew. We also knew they were planning something as well—payback. It would most likely involve squirreling ammo from the range. That was Chris—always in charge—always with a plan. Nothing would ever rattle him no matter how desperate. Those traits would shine through in Vietnam. That Silver Star was a downgrade from a DSC and a Medal of Honor nomination cast which was aside because he refused to extend his tour in Nam as part of the deal.

The Marines eventually did fire back but it was only one round. With a single round, it is over so quick that anyone hearing it really could not come up with any accurate identification, let alone direction and distance. It really wasn't much of a payback.

Another good friend at the 52nd Ordinance was Joe Foccerri. Joe had DEROS-ed from Vietnam to the 52nd to bide his time for his last six months till he was discharged back to his home in New York City. When he wasn't on guard, Joe was at the billiards table. He beat all comers at the EM

club, but I was the only one that knew how really good he was. He was a pool hustler—the real thing. He would always just barely beat his opponents and would even let them win a few to keep them coming back.

One day Joe and I were driving through downtown Clarksville, Tennessee and we passed a pool hall. He told me to find a place to park so we could play some pool. We walked in and rented a table and started playing eight ball. There was a guy sitting against the wall watching Joe. He was very interested in Joe's play and studied him for a good while. Joe was aware of this and went into his rope-a-dope mode. After a few mediocre games, Joe ran the lows and sunk the eight ball on me. The guy walked over and asked Joe if he was interested in playing for money? Joe suggested nine ball—\$20 a game. Joe won three games in a row—sinking the nine on the break twice. This wasn't exactly rope-a-dope and it looked more like luck, but he was still hustling the guy. The stranger then suggested a game of straight pool to 125 for \$500—winner takes all. Joe agreed and gathered the balls in the rack—all but two. With the \$1000 stacked on the rail, they lagged for break and the stranger won. Joe set the rack and they were off. The stranger then broke and ran nearly fifty balls before missing. The whole room stopped what they were doing and watched intently. Joe started in and never looked up for nearly eight full racks and dropped the 125th with no fanfare while the stranger watched. Without hesitation, Joe nodded to me, then to the stranger—picked the stack of cash—and beat for the door. We jumped in my car and I looked back through the rearview mirror as the pool hall emptied out and watched us leave. It was the greatest display of pool skill I ever saw firsthand. Back at the day room of the barracks, he returned to his stumble-bum way of just barely winning.

In late May of 1969, we all got orders for Vietnam. Chris and Tony were headed for the Americal Division. Don Rich and Dennis Shine were bound for the 101st. And Crutchfield and I were headed for the 5th Infantry Division on the DMZ. On June 6, I shipped home for a 30-day leave. That was the fastest thirty days that I had ever experience. It went by in the blink of an eye. I met Chris and Dennis somewhere—at one of the Worcester VFW Posts, I believe, for a few drinks and farewells. We traded home addresses but I don't believe we ever contacted one another while in Southeast Asia.

July 6 finally arrived and I vividly remember saying my goodbyes to my family. My dad was quiet and pretty much said that I be careful. *How do you do that*, I thought? My siblings Nancy, Lisa, John and Linda were 9, 12, 13 and 18 respectively. The younger ones were a little confused with emotion and really didn't comprehend what was happening.

The commercial airline took me to SEATAC Air Base and I was bussed into Fort Lewis. Several days later I was on another commercial airline—Pan American—bound for Southeast Asia. We landed in Honolulu, Hawaii for a two-hour holdover and a change of crew. Back in the air, we settled into the long hop to Guam. As entertainment, we played poker. The steward and one of the stewardess' sat in and we took them for several hundred dollars. After a time, cards got boring and we just sat uncomfortably and watched the endless Pacific below pass by. We touched down in Guam to refuel again and they let us out for an hour to stretch our legs. When the door was opened, the humidity hit us like a ton of bricks. It was a harbinger of what was to come.

Back in the air, we got underway again on the hop to Ton Son Nhut Airbase. We landed under darkness and were bussed to a filthy barracks to spend the night. The humidity was so intense that I lay in a puddle of sweat and never slept a wink. The next morning we were fed a breakfast of slop and were soon bussed back to the tarmac to catch a C-130 to Danang. The humidity was again unbearable. The C-130 landed and eventually we boarded another fixed wing plane to Camp Red devil or Quang tri—I really can't remember which. Anyway, it was the home of the 5th Infantry Division Mechanized. I was trucked to Alpha Company, 75th Support Battalion for a day and a half of grueling jungle training—a bit of a dog and pony show. We went out on a patrol, walked into a mock L-shaped ambush and learned how to set up a trip flair and a claymore mine. That was it basically—we were now ready for combat they said. Right!!! My new unit—Alpha Company,

1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment was in a place called Qua Viet—about a mile from the DMZ. Oh boy—and I thought it couldn't get any worse.

Chapter 5—The Drawdown

Coincidentally, on July 8, 1969, about the same time that I landed at Tan Son Nhut Air Force base outside of Saigon, President Nixon announced the first troop withdrawal. That very first U.S. troop withdrawal occurred as 800 men from the 9th Infantry Division were sent home. The phased troop withdrawal then proceeded in fourteen stages from that time through November of 1972. ¹⁰ The U S Army and the government in general could have saved a lot of money and jet fuel if they just cancelled our flight to Vietnam and our levee as part of their troop reduction. I dare say many of the FNG KIAs could have been prevented. It seemed to me that that was the sensible thing to do, but there is a perfect example of SNAFU or FUBAR.

The Troop Withdrawal and Vietnamization

When Richard Nixon had taken office that January, 25,000 American soldiers had died in Vietnam over the previous four years. The war was starting to become unpopular and Nixon had a new plan to present to the American people. So he declared, on behalf of the United States, what he called the Nixon Doctrine and was *"quite emphatic on two points" in dealing with its Asian allies. First, he assured America's friends in Asia that "We will keep our treaty commitments." However, "as far as the problems of military defense, except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons," the United States would be adopting a different stance. In relation to military defense, America would now "encourage and has a right to expect that this problem will be increasingly handled by, and the responsibility for it taken by, the Asian nations themselves." He concluded that his recent talks with several Asian leaders indicated, "They are going to be willing to undertake this responsibility."* ¹¹ The Nixon Doctrine also marked the formal announcement of the president's "Vietnamization" plan, whereby American troops would be slowly withdrawn from service in the country and would provide training and be replaced by ARVN forces. Nixon, Kissinger and the rest of the executive branch portrayed a very hopeful attitude about this idea in speeches and news media releases, but behind the scenes feelings of success on this issue flip-flopped one hundred eighty degrees.

Even still, they groped for a way to publically supply a legitimate reason for our forces to be fighting there—when in fact there was one already. Previous administrations had supported the "Domino Theory" that simply expounded that America halt the growth of Communism in Vietnam to insure that other adjacent countries would not follow suit one by one. In fact, the passage of time has proven the Domino Theory was a complete success as no other countries succumbed to Chinese or Russian influence since. However, the Nixon's staff thought that they had to put a different slant on this policy to re-convince the American public. This is portrayed in a letter from Eliot Richardson to Henry Kissinger in November of 1969. One gets the feeling they are now trying to re-convince themselves more than persuade the American people.

Richardson to Kissinger: In thinking about the opportunity—and the need—for a Presidential restatement of our purposes and plans for Viet-Nam, I keep coming back to the pivotal question: why are we justified in calling for additional sacrifices of American lives and the continuing diversion of American resources for something less than victory but short of defeat? It is not enough, I believe, to point to the goal of self-determination for the people of South Viet-Nam. Only a few of the world's peoples enjoy that privilege, if by it we mean the exercise of free choice through fair and honest elections. Nor is this goal made sufficient by the circumstance that in South Viet-Nam the major danger to its fulfillment is externally supported insurgency: the President himself, in his Southeast Asian tour, made clear that assistance against insurgency, even though externally supported, will not hereafter justify the involvement of U.S. combat forces. There is, however, an element in the South Vietnamese situation which significantly distinguishes it from other situations in which the exercise of self-determination is threatened by external force. This is that we have made a commitment—a promise—to the

people of South Viet-Nam to help them preserve the opportunity to determine their own destiny. Whether or not it was wise in the first instance for us to have undertaken such a commitment is not now in issue: the important fact is that we have undertaken it."

In this letter, Eliot Richardson showed very little belief that Vietnamization would work and the American public and the Peace coalition did not buy into any of this either, but it was decided that slow troop withdrawal and Vietnamization was now the path to follow. Try as they may to finish what they started, the U S government in the name of Henry Kissinger—in Paris—started secret meetings with Le Duc To on August 4, 1969 to form a peace agreement. Representatives from Hanoi arrived as well. To add fuel to the fire, on August 15th, the first organized "Moratorium" demonstrations were staged in many of America's major cities. Coupling these events, with the huge American losses suffered in mid-June, including the 46 Americans killed on Hamburger Hill, the end was evident and history would ultimately prove this out—albeit some four plus years down the road and 33,000 American lives later. Still, the government tried to downplay the demonstrators as misguided youth who would come around or would be brought to ground by their parents. The parents and that generation was the "Silent Majority" and Nixon wanted to revive it. Nixon downplayed the power of these demonstrators no matter what advice his advisor gave to him. It was unheeded like the advice below from Under-Secretary of Urban Affairs, Daniel Patrick Moynihan—who Nixon once described as "One of those Harvard Bastards".

Memorandum From the President's Assistant for Urban Affairs (Moynihan) to President Nixon: *Last night Teddy White related to me your hopes for reviving the Eisenhower-Nixon majority [Silent Majority]. This seems to me altogether a worthy goal, and a perfectly feasible one. But I fear we may be jeopardizing that outcome by certain present postures which are now in no way central to any of your other goals or policies. The Eisenhower-Nixon majority was broad-based. (Ike got 20% of the black vote in 1952 and twice that in 1956.) But its bedrock consisted of the business and professional class of the nation. These provided the brains, the money, the élan. Clearly your overall policies are ideal for mobilizing that group once again. Your fixed intention to get us out of that war in Asia; to put the economy back in balance; to restore the authority of public institutions; to achieve social progress with social stability—all these are precisely the goals of that group. I think, however, you could lose much of it—needlessly—if their children begin to take personally your necessary, proper and essentially impersonal opposition to their own effort to make foreign policy in the streets. It must be remembered that to an extraordinary degree the demonstrators are an elite group.—I would hazard that half their parents are Republicans.—I would not be surprised if those parents contributed half the funds spent by either major party in the 1968 election.—Note, for example, that much of the money behind this weekend's demonstration comes from General Motors and Singer Sewing Machine fortunes. (The Ole Mole, the radical journal in Cambridge, is financed by the granddaughter of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith. There is no end to such examples.) As with most such groups, they really are kind of arrogant. Teddy White told a (private) story. His son will be down from Harvard this weekend, demonstrating with his girlfriend. She is an Auchincloss. As she put it "Uncle Mac [Bundy] and Uncle Bill [Bundy] made a terrible mistake about Vietnam, and I feel I must help rectify it." They can also be wonderful. Maureen Finch who took part in the Moratorium worked for me this summer, and was superb. I gather that Mel Laird's son who also took part is equally an attractive young man. And in the mass they are powerful. One of the least understood phenomenon of the time is the way in which the radical children of the upper middle classes have influenced their parents. That is why Time Magazine, Life, Newsweek, NBC, CBS, the New York Times and the media in general will take their side against anybody whatsoever: the Democratic Party, the Pentagon, Mayor Daley. Or, if it should ever come to it ... you. In the course of the rioting at the Chicago convention Tom Wicker of the New York Times uttered the famous remark "But those are our children down there on the street." It*

remained for Pete Hamill to comment that "You'd think no cop ever had a mother." No matter. The kids finished Humphrey. Their parents are in a curious way proud of them. Last Saturday at half time at the Harvard-Princeton game the Harvard Band lined up and began its march with the announcement "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Effete Harvard Corps of Intellectual Snobs." There cannot have been less than \$10 billion bucks of Republican money in the Stadium at the time, and as one man it roared approval, i.e., unity with the undergraduates in the face of an outsider who dared affront them. After all, they are Harvard men, etc. (Try to remember that I went to the City College of New York on the subway. So I am not writing about anybody I know!) I sometimes like these kids. More often I detest their ignorant, chiliastic, almost insolent self-confidence. But I think it extremely important for the administration not to allow itself to become an object of their incredible powers of derision, destruction, and disdain."

This all went over Nixon's head as well as that of all the military brass in the Pentagon. Consequently, Nixon paid no heed to Moynihan but Nixon needed a Democrat and Moynihan needed a President—albeit the fact that Nixon was not cast in the mold of his beloved John F Kennedy didn't seem to bother him. The duo of Richard Nixon and Daniel Patrick Moynihan was a most ill-assorted pair and the consummate odd-couple, but—again—Nixon needed a Democrat, and Moynihan needed a president.

Indeed, in his new book, "The Professor and the President", Stephen Hess, a Republican journalist who worked with Moynihan for Nixon in the White House before a long career at the Brookings Institution, asks whether "Of all the odd couples in American public life, were they not the oddest?" Nixon, scowling and paranoid, the most combative (though not the most conservative) of Republican politicians, had survived eight often humiliating years as Ike Eisenhower's vice-president. When he ran for the White House in 1960 he was beaten by John Kennedy by a handful of votes. He became a laughing-stock for the press when he failed to become governor of California two years later. Moynihan was six foot five inches (nearly two meters) of Irish brawn and charm, one of the "Harvard bastards" Nixon disdained but sometimes employed. He [Moynihan] liked to say he was "baptized a Catholic but born a Democrat". He had idolized Kennedy and helped to inspire Lyndon Johnson's 1965 Howard University speech, the high water mark of liberal commitment."

Little did anyone then know the large role that the Fifth Infantry would play that fall in the struggle between the Hawks and the Doves and between Nixon's Silent Majority and the Vietnam War Moratorium protesters? As I will infer later in this book, the clash on Hill 162 & Hill 100 was just one of many well-planned engagements by Hanoi in every sector of South Vietnam, timed to synchronize with the Paris Peace Talks & the second round of Moratorium Demonstrations. Little did anyone know that it would turn out to be some of the heaviest fighting of 1969. Furthermore Hanoi hoped to gain one or more resounding victories just before the November 15th moratorium marches to use as leverage in Paris. With the secret talks now taking place between Henry Kissinger and Le Duc To and the Paris Peace Talks about to resume, the Nixon administration was looking for any way to withdraw from Southeast Asia. The troop reduction had already begun and it was evident that victory was no longer the goal, but it was instead to turn tail and run—albeit in a dignified and honorably perceived way. The North Vietnamese government saw this and were just waiting for the perfect opportunity to engage a large American military unit and defeat them in a totally crushing way—an ace-in-the-hole so to speak at the peace talks. They would find their perceived Number One patsy a month later in the Fifth Infantry that was preparing to take over the Northern I Corps from the Third Marine Division who were in turn withdrawing from Vietnam and deploying to Okinawa in November. They would bide their time and watch this unit as they went through a complete turnover of troopers in July and August—exactly one year since their deployment to Vietnam. They would be certain to see that the Fifth was now a green unit comprised mostly of new replacements. For now, they would wait.^{vi}

On September 2, 1969, in the wake of the brutality of Typhoon

Doris on Vietnam with over 50 inches of rain and one hundred plus mile per hour winds, Ho Chi Minh died of a heart attack at age 79. He was succeeded by Le Duan, who publicly read the last will and testament of Ho Chi Minh urging the North Vietnamese to fight on "until the last Yankee has gone." In a juxtaposition of the violent typhoon, torture of American prisoners was for the most part eliminated as North Vietnamese policy upon the Hanoi leader's death.

On October 16th, demonstration organizers finally received praises from North Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, who stated in a letter to them "...may your fall offensive succeed splendidly," marking the first time Hanoi publicly acknowledged the American anti-war movement. Dong's comments infuriated American conservatives including Vice President Spiro Agnew who lambasted the protesters as Communist "dupes" comprised of "an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals."ⁱⁱⁱ

While North Vietnam finally knew that they had an ally in the Peace Demonstrators, the beginning stages of their fall offensive against the Fifth Infantry on the DMZ were in motion as well by late October. Task Force 1-61 looked to be a possible candidate to use as that ace-in-the-hole in Paris. A few days later an unofficial cease fire was agreed to and the secret talks began. It would turn out to be an opportunity to build NVA forces near the DMZ and would eventually be a one-sided cease fire. Still, Nixon appeared on TV with his "Silent Majority" speech on November 3rd in a last but useless attempt to offset the effects of the demonstrations on public opinion.

Richard Nixon Silent Majority Speech: In San Francisco a few weeks ago, I saw demonstrators carrying signs reading: "Lose in Vietnam, bring the boys home." Well, one of the strengths of our free society is that any American has a right to reach that conclusion and to advocate that point of view. But as President of the United States, I would be untrue to my oath of office if I allowed the policy of this Nation to be dictated by the minority who hold that point of view and who try to impose it on the Nation by mounting demonstrations in the street. For almost 200 years, the policy of this Nation has been made under our Constitution by those leaders in the Congress and the White House elected by all of the people. If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority, this Nation has no future as a free society. And now I would like to address a word, if I may, to the young people of this Nation who are particularly concerned, and I understand why they are concerned, about this war. I respect your idealism. I share your concern for peace. I want peace as much as you do. There are powerful personal reasons I want to end this war. This week I will have to sign 83 letters to mothers, fathers, wives, and loved ones of men who have given their lives for America in Vietnam. It is very little satisfaction to me that this is only one-third as many letters as I signed the first week in office. There is nothing I want more than to see the day come when I do not have to write any of those letters. I want to end the war to save the lives of those brave young men in Vietnam. But I want to end it in a way which will increase the chance that their younger brothers and their sons will not have to fight in some future Vietnam someplace in the world. And I want to end the war for another reason. I want to end it so that the energy and dedication of you, our young people, now too often directed into bitter hatred against those responsible for the war, can be turned to the great challenges of peace, a better life for all Americans, a better life for all people on this earth. I have chosen a plan for peace. I believe it will succeed. If it does succeed, what the critics say now won't matter. If it does not succeed, anything I say then won't matter. I know it may not be fashionable to speak of patriotism or national destiny these days. But I feel it is appropriate to do so on this occasion. Two hundred years ago this Nation was weak and poor. But even then, America was the hope of millions in the world. Today we have become the strongest and richest nation in the world. And the wheel of destiny has turned so that any hope the world has for the survival of peace and freedom will be determined by whether the American people have the moral stamina and the courage to meet the challenge of free world leadership. Let histori-

ans not record that when America was the most powerful nation in the world we passed on the other side of the road and allowed the last hopes for peace and freedom of millions of people to be suffocated by the forces of totalitarianism. And so tonight to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans, I ask for your support. I pledged in my campaign for the Presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. I have initiated a plan of action which will enable me to keep that pledge. The more support I can have from the American people, the sooner that pledge can be redeemed; for the more divided we are at home, the less likely, the enemy is to negotiate at Paris. Let us be united for peace. Let us also be united against defeat. Because let us understand: North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that. Fifty years ago, in this room and at this very desk, President Woodrow Wilson spoke words which caught the imagination of a war-weary world. He said: "This is the war to end war." His dream for peace after World War I was shattered on the hard realities of great power politics and Woodrow Wilson died a broken man. Tonight I do not tell you that the war in Vietnam is the war to end wars. But I do say this: I have initiated a plan which will end this war in a way that will bring us closer to that great goal to which Woodrow Wilson and every American President in our history has been dedicated—the goal of a just and lasting peace. As President I hold the responsibility for choosing the best path to that goal and then leading The Nation along it. I pledge to you tonight that I shall meet this responsibility with all of the strength and wisdom I can command in accordance with your hopes, mindful of your concerns, sustained by your prayers. Thank you and goodnight.^{iv}

As it turned out the once Silent Majority began shrinking every day and that vocal minority—comprised mostly of their children—grew every day. The organizers of the moratorium—bolstered by the success of the August demonstrations, were organizing more aggressively for the next round of protests planned in mid-November. Considered the largest political rally in U S history, the November 15, 1969 march of over 500,000 protesters on Washington D C in the frigid autumn cold, was billed the most influential protest ever. Simultaneously, millions more marched in nearly every city in the United States. What the protesters didn't know, however, was that Nixon's plan, and the specifics of troop withdrawal and Vietnamization were already written in stone in the White House and proceeding toward an eventual withdrawal and the war's end. They also didn't know that North Vietnam would break the cease fire all over Vietnam and when they saw the opportunity to trap Task Force 1-61, they would play for that ace-in-the-hole on Hill 162 and Hill 100. And they could not have known that the subsequent overwhelming victory of Task Force 1-61 under its commander Lt. Colonel John Swaren, against three battalions of the 27th NVA regiment might have contributed to the collapse of the Paris Peace Talks and the continuation of America's active part in the war for nearly four more years.

i. *Actually we traveled to Maguire Air force Base and boarded three olive drab military buses for the short trip to Dix.*

ii. *History Place*, <<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/index-1969.html>> , 1999

iii. *This Day In History*, <<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-nixon-doctrine-is-announced->> , 2015

iv. *Department of state, Office of the Historian, letter from Richardson to Kissinger*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v01/d42>> 1969

v. *Department of state, Office of the Historian, letter from Moynahan to Nixon, Document 45* <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v01/d42>> 1969

vi. *The Economist, Article on Hess' Book, "Culture"*, <[http://www.economist.com/sections/culture-](http://www.economist.com/sections/culture)> , 2014

vii. *The opinion of this author that would eventually be backed up by North Vietnamese intelligence reports captured near Saigon.*

viii. *History Place*, <<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/index-1969.html>> , 1999

ix. *The History Place, Nixon's "Silent Majority" speech*, <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/nixon-silent.htm>, 1969



OPEN LEADERSHIP POSITION FOR NATIONAL WEB ADMINSTRATOR

National Web Administrator position: The National Web Administrator also called a web architect, web developer, site author, or website administrator, is a person responsible for maintaining the Society's website. The duties may include ensuring that the web servers, hardware and software are operating accurately, maintaining the design of the website, generating and revising web pages, replying to user comment, and examining traffic through the site.

The Web Administrator will also oversee the technical aspects of website construction and maintenance and also the management of the content. Core responsibilities of the Web Administrator may include the regulation and management of access rights of different users of a website, and the appearance and setting up website navigation. Content placement can be part of a Web Administrator's responsibilities, while content creation may not be.

If you are interested in serving the Society in this leadership position, contact Bob Dudley at colrdudley@aol.com or 913-220-3725.

Society Leadership Position

As everyone knows the Society selects a new National 2nd Vice President every year. The National 2nd Vice President elected in September 2017 will host the Society's 100th reunion in 2020. Additionally we are looking for a Web Administrator who is versed in HTML code.

If you are interested in serving the Society in a leadership position contact Bob Dudley at colrdudley@aol.com or 913-220-3725.

SOCIETY OF THE FIFTH DIVISION REUNION**SATURDAY DINNER CHOICES**

September 9, 2017

\$46 per Person

Chicken Supreme Customized Plated Dinner

House Salad of Mixed Greens with Cucumbers, Tomato & Onion served with Ranch Dressing and Balsamic Vinaigrette
Rolls and Butter
Sautéed Chicken Breast with Supreme Sauce
Complimentary Starch & Vegetable (Chef's Choice)
Chef's Choice of Dessert

Sliced Roast Beef Customized Plated Dinner

House Salad of Mixed Greens with Cucumbers, Tomato & Onion served with Ranch Dressing and Balsamic Vinaigrette
Rolls and Butter
Sliced Roast Beef with a Cabernet-Mushroom Demi Glaze
Complimentary Starch and Vegetable (Chef's Choice)
Chef's Choice of Dessert

Garlic Herb Pork Loin Customized Plated Dinner

House Salad of Mixed Greens with Cucumbers, Tomato & Onion served with Ranch Dressing and Balsamic Vinaigrette
Rolls and Butter
Garlic Herb Pork Loin with Apple Chutney & Rosemary Demi-Glace
Complimentary Starch and Vegetable (Chef's Choice)
Chef's Choice of Dessert

SUNDAY DINNER CHOICES

September 10, 2017

\$46 per Person

Chicken Marsala Customized Plated Dinner

House Salad of Mixed Greens with Cucumbers, Tomato & Onion served with Ranch Dressing and Balsamic Vinaigrette
Rolls and Butter
Sautéed Breast of Chicken with Mushroom Marsala Sauce
Complimentary Starch and Vegetable (Chef's Choice)
Chef's Choice of Dessert

Grilled Sirloin Customized Plated Dinner

House Salad of Mixed Greens with Cucumbers, Tomato & Onion served with Ranch Dressing and Balsamic Vinaigrette
Rolls and Butter
8 oz. Grilled Sirloin Topped with Sautéed Mushrooms, Natural Pan Juices
Complimentary Starch and Vegetable (Chef's Choice)
Chef's Choice of Dessert

Seared Salmon Customized Plated Dinner

House Salad of Mixed Greens with Cucumbers, Tomato & Onion served with Ranch Dressing and Balsamic Vinaigrette
Rolls and Butter
Seared Salmon-Pan Seared Filet with Leek Confit, Smoked Tomato Jus
Complimentary Starch and Vegetable (Chef's Choice)
Chef's Choice of Dessert

With all menus: Starbucks® Freshly Brewed Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee, and Iced Tea

HILTON KANSAS CITY AIRPORT – KANSAS CITY, MO
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Location

8801 NW 112th Street, Kansas City, MO 64153

Located just five minutes from the Kansas City International Airport and just 15 minutes from downtown Kansas City

Reservation Information

Please call the number above and reference the Society of the Fifth Division Association or please visit www.group.hilton.com/SocietyoftheFifthDivision

Group Name: Society of the Fifth Division

Reunion Dates: September 7-11, 2017

Rate: \$99 (Single/Double) \$109 (Triple/Quad) + tax (currently 16.225% + \$1.50 per night) Rate includes breakfast for up to 2 people in the hotel restaurant

Cut-off Date: 08/03/17 Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

Cancellation Policy: Cancellation must be received 24 hours prior to arrival date or there will be a charge of one night's room plus tax.

Parking & Shuttle Information

The Hilton Kansas City Airport offers free parking and free shuttle service to and from Kansas City International Airport. Airport shuttle service is offered upon request, please contact the hotel upon arrival at the airport and proceed to the baggage claim area for pickup.

Wheelchair Rental

ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call (888) 441-7575 or visit www.scootaround.com for details and to make reservations.

New Item In Quartermaster Catalog !

For those of you who want to stay on top of the latest trend in

Red Devil Headgear Don't miss our new

“Society of the Fifth Division all occasion Headgear”

Yes!!! One size fits all heads. (even officers and senior NCO's)

Hats w/embroidered logo design, adjustable, \$15.00 ea. plus \$5.00 shipping.

Contact the Quartermaster today and flaunt your Red Devil Awareness.

The Red Diamond in center flanked by our Wartime Record seated on "Red Devil".

Our Motto: "WE WILL" on obverse side.



SOCIETY OF THE 5TH DIVISION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/society2017 (3.5% will be added to total). All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before August 3, 2017. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: SOCIETY OF THE 5TH

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 8/3/17

	Price Per	# of People	Total
TOURS			
FRIDAY 9/8: KANSAS CITY TOUR	\$50		\$
SATURDAY 9/9: NATIONAL WWI MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL	\$50		\$
SATURDAY: BANQUET DINNER (Please select your entrée)			
Sliced Roast Beef with a Cabernet-Mushroom Demi-Glaze	\$46		\$
Sautéed Chicken Breast with Supreme Sauce	\$46		\$
Garlic Herb Pork Loin with Apple Chutney and Rosemary Demi-Glaze	\$46		\$
SUNDAY: BANQUET DINNER (Please select your entrée)			
8 oz. Grilled Sirloin Topped with Sautéed Mushrooms	\$46		\$
Sautéed Chicken Breast with Mushroom Marsala Sauce	\$46		\$
Pan-Seared Salmon Filet with Leek Confit and Smoked Tomato Jus	\$46		\$
PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE			
Covers various reunion expenses.	\$20		\$
DONATION FOR HOSPITALITY ROOM EXPENSES	\$		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT YOUR NAMETAG TO READ

FIRST _____ LAST _____

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES _____

UNIT INFORMATION (ex. D CO/1st BN/11th Infantry): _____

YEARS SERVED W/ 5ID(ex. 1965-66): _____

WHERE (CIRCLE ONE): WWII FT CARSON VIETNAM FT POLK OTHER: _____

CURRENT & PAST SOCIETY OFFICE HELD (ex. NATIONAL FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, PAST PRESIDENT, ETC.): _____

STREET ADDRESS OF MAIN ATTENDEE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PH. NUMBER (_____) _____ - _____ EMAIL _____ @ _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY). YES NO

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-4:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. By submitting this form you will be enrolled in our monthly newsletter subscription. To opt out of this service, please check the box.

**SOCIETY OF THE 5TH DIVISION REUNION
SEPTEMBER 7 – 10, 2017
HILTON KANSAS CITY AIRPORT – KANSAS CITY**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

1:00pm - 5:00pm

Reunion Registration Open

Hospitality Room to be open throughout reunion, hours to be posted.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

8:30am - 9:30am

Reunion Registration Open

10:00am - 3:30pm

KANSAS CITY TOUR

4:00pm - 5:30pm

Reunion Registration Open

Additional hours will be posted if needed.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

8:30am - 9:30am

Executive Board Meeting

9:30am - 2:30pm

NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL

6:00pm - 7:00pm

Cash Bar Reception

7:00pm - 10:00pm

Dinner Banquet

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

9:00am - 10:00am

Non-denominational Worship Service

10:00am - 11:00am

Memorial Service

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Society General Membership Meeting

6:00pm - 7:00pm

Cash Bar Reception

7:00pm - 10:00pm

Dinner Banquet

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Farewells and Departures

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date (8/3/17), Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$7 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

**SOCIETY OF THE 5TH DIVISION REUNION
TOUR DESCRIPTIONS****KANSAS CITY TOUR
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2017**

Kansas City is known as the City of Fountains. See why as we make our way through the area. Some points of interest include Lewis and Clark Point and Union Station. A new addition to the downtown area is the Kauffman Performing Arts Center, much like the Opera House in Australia. Also enjoy Kauffman Gardens. You'll have free time for lunch on your own at Country Club Plaza, Kansas City's premier retail, restaurant, and entertainment district. The plaza offers more than 150 shops and restaurants nestled within old-world architecture, captivating fountains, and expressive works of art. After lunch, we will make our way to the American Jazz Museum and the conjoined Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (NLBM). Take time to tour these two museums. The American Jazz Museum showcases the sights and sounds of jazz through interactive exhibits and films, visual arts exhibits, and enriching jazz audiences. The NLBM includes multi-media displays, and artifacts dating from the late 1800s through the 1960s preserving the rich history of African-American Baseball. You will have time to explore both museums before returning to the hotel.

**10:00am board bus, 3:30pm back at hotel
\$50/Person includes bus, guide, and admission.
Lunch on your own.**

**NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2017**

Ranked the number one attraction in Kansas City and the fifth best museum in the United States, the National World War I Museum and Memorial has been called a "national treasure". Steeped in history, the National World War I Museum and Memorial is America's only museum dedicated to sharing the stories of the Great War through the eyes of those who lived it. We will arrive at the museum and begin with a brief memorial service outside of Liberty Memorial Tower, which rises 217 feet above the main courtyard. After the Memorial Service, you'll receive a guided tour of the museum. In the museum you'll enjoy interactive displays, thought-provoking films and eyewitness testimonies, while receiving a narrated tour of the largest collection of WWI artifacts in the world. Following the tour, grab your boxed lunch from the "Over There Café" and enjoy some time on your own exploring the grounds and museum.

**9:30am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel
\$50/Person includes bus, guide, admission, and lunch.**

From the Chaplain

Pentecost - Christian

(For John Truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with The Holy Spirit, not many days hence. Acts 1:5)

Penta simply means fifty (50). It is a Day celebrated by Christians, as 50 days after Christ arose from the dead. Before He Ascended, Jesus Promised to send the Person of The Holy Spirit, to His Church living upon earth. Thus it was that The Third Person of The Trinity, descended from Heaven, and came to dwell upon earth, to live in His Children's "Souls/Hearts". There, He Reigns as King, cleansing their heart from pollution and sin. There He sanctifies the soul with Holiness; preparing the Saint for Heaven, at their death.

Ten days after Jesus' Ascension, it happened! His Appearance was dramatic beyond words, as men and women at Jerusalem, from many different languages and countries, suddenly begin to speak the same language...the Language of Heaven. (Acts 2:2-21) It was the exact opposite of the Tower of Babel; where God confounded the earth's one common language; producing the over 20,000 different language, we have in the world today. (Gen. 11:9) With God; anything is possible. But try to imagine yourself suddenly; being taught by The Holy Spirit, in one-split second, to be able to speak fluent Burundisism.

It was the "beginning harvest" of The Holy Spirit, where He saved 3000, at the Jerusalem Temple, on that special day, now celebrated by The Church yearly. His Glorious Work continued down the many generations, to this very day and hour.

What an Eternally interesting Person and Being, The Holy Spirit is. He is Beautiful and All-Powerful. He is not some vague power, but is God, Himself. He is Very God, one in Essence with The Father and The Son. We can know He is God, because Scripture clearly speaks of His Eternal Existence, His Divine Names, His Attributes, His Works, His Grace, His Honor, His Glory and His Sovereignty. He was instrumental in the Creation of the earth. He must be believed, obeyed, known, prayed to, and worshiped. We can read of His Wisdom, "for The Spirit searches all things, yes, even the deep things of God. He can be lied to, offended, vexed, slandered; and the only unforgivable sin...is blasphemy against Him. (Matt. 12:31)

He is often called the "shy One" of the Trinity, because He choses to always speak of Jesus Christ, instead of Himself. While He is a Spirit, He has manifested Himself upon earth with many physical forms; such as a dove, as flames of fire, as the pillar of cloud leading the Children of Israel, as a still small voice, as breath, as a river, as poured water, as Communicator, as Comforter, and as wind. He must be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth.

His Work is especially in Communication and Comfort. He Communicates between God and His Children. His is The Voice, speaking through Scripture. His is The Voice, groaning in Prayer. His is the Voice drying the bitter tears. His is The Voice of Rejoicing.

In the Book of Revelations, we can "see" a glimpse of Heaven. There we can "see" the Person of The Son, and The

Person of The Father; but not The Person of The Holy Spirit. The reason is simple; for The Person of The Holy Spirit currently lives on earth, and will continue to do so, until the last Saint, is fully sanctified and saved. At that moment, there will be "The Un-Pentecosting"; for the Work of the "Harvesting of souls", will be finished. The Person of The Holy Spirit will then leave this earth, ascending again to Heaven, where The Three Persons of The Trinity, will be fully reunited again in Heaven. That is "The Moment of Completion", when God's Shout, "IT IS DONE", will resound loudly, throughout the Universe. (Rev. 21:6) That is also the exact moment, when Jesus will appear on the Cloud, to Gather His Saints, His entire Sanctified Church. There will be The Ultimate Triumph of The Trinity; the war between Good and evil, will finally be over. Judgement of all earth's inhabitants shall take place there. The defeated Satan, the father of lies, with all of his evil fallen angels, will be bound hand and foot, and cast into the Lake of Fire, never to rise again, to torment Heaven. What a VICTORY; that will be! To be part of that Victory; you must also have The Holy Spirit, living in your "heart".

Pentecost - Jewish

The Jewish Pentecost is celebrated fifty (50) days after their Passover. It is also called the Feast of Harvest. It is mentioned five times in the first five books of the Bible. It was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Israel there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during the months of late May and early June. The Latter or final harvest came in the fall. Pentecost was especially the celebration of the beginning of the wheat harvest.

Israel was called the land, "flowing with milk and honey". However, Israel always was highly dependent upon the raining season; the latter and the former rains. Israel's survival and future depended on God supplying the land with "life-giving rain", which provided them with the "fruits of the land". Therefore, all of Israel had a keen interest in rain. They paid deep respect and reverence to God, for providing them with food for survival.

To help them, celebrate this holiday properly, Pentecost was viewed as a pilgrim festival. All of adult Israel was required to come, from wherever they lived; to personally be in attendance during these days. By designating this day as a holiday, no senile work was to be done. Shops were closed. Schools were not in session. Commerce ceased. Certain sacrifices and offerings were prescribed in the Law for This Day. The High Priest was to take two loaves of freshly baked wheat bread and offer these fruits of the harvest, in the Temple, to The Lord.

Pentecost was a great and grand harvest celebration. Each year the streets of Jerusalem would be clogged with thousands of rejoicing pilgrims, celebrating the Goodness of God, in providing for such a bountiful harvest.

~Continued on next page~

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FYI - Jim Monk served in the 5th Division and led a combat unit. He is writing a book about Vietnam, and his experiences. Below is the back cover of his new book.

Jim Monk

BRAVO 22 (Back cover)

There have been many books written about the Vietnam experience. I decided to write this book because all Vietnam combat experiences were different. Those of us who have had the privilege to lead young men in battle understand the gravity and the stress involved in making life-and-death decisions.

I would like to be perfectly clear that I do not see myself as any kind of a hero. In fact the title of the book *Reluctant to Engage* came from my feelings of uncertainty in my first combat command. For those of us who served in the United States Army after the My Lai massacre there was a sense to be extremely careful about how aggressive you let the troops under your command actively engage the enemy. There were times when it was apparent that the civilians were actually NVA or the VC but you could not engage them because they were unarmed.

I think most combat veterans are reluctant to share experiences that they have had because of the fact that often it brings up memories which are painful and terrifying. I was encouraged to write my feelings and my impressions in this book by my oldest son who realized that as in all past conflicts the histories are soon forgotten and the events are fogged over by the passage of time

Many of the combat veterans that I have talked to that have had some of the same experiences that I have a similar problem in discussing accounts of the Vietnam War. I think all combat veterans find comfort in extolling the humorous side of our situations not because we are seeking some sort of recognition but it becomes a way to deal with those feelings and recriminations combat leaders have.

Each knows how lucky they have been, each understanding how dangerous and how terrible the consequences are if you make a mistake.

TAPS

(Jan. - April - 2017)

Ephor Hall
died Dec. 31, 2016
C. Company, 1/11
Vietnam - 69

Barney Hyatt
died Feb. 14, 2017
Co. H, 11th
WWII

John E. Boyle
died - date unknown
Co. B - 2nd Infantry
WWII

Emma Sherron
died March 4, 2017
Wife of 5th Division member -
Ray Sherron - Vietnam

Subject: Audit Results-- Funds Administrated by the Society of the 5th Division

Applying the audit procedures contained in the attached document, the Audit Committee has audited the accounting records of the Society's National Treasurer and the related use of funds for the period August 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016.

The audit results are as follow:

1. **Total receipts** and **expenditures** reflected on the Treasurer's Account Activity Report reconciled with amounts contained in the Society's bank statements.
2. The amounts reflected on the Account Activity Report by **category of receipts** (membership fees, quartermaster sales, reunion fees and donations, etc.), were supported by the Treasurer' accounting ledgers, deposits slips, and bank statements.
3. The amounts reflected on the Account Activity Report by **category of expenditures/disbursement** (Red Diamond, reunion, IT, etc.), were supported by invoices, receipts, and canceled checks.
4. We evaluated the **propriety of \$8,582 of expenditures/disbursements** (out of a total \$10,256), covering each of the six disbursement categories listed in the Account Activity Report. All disbursements appeared reasonable and necessary to accomplish the Society's objectives.
5. The Certificates of Deposit value of \$40,535.95, as reflected on the on the Account Activity Report, was supported by an account statement from the financial institution "Edward Jones".

In conclusion, we have concluded that **Society funds were properly accounted for** and **expenditures were reasonable and necessary** to accomplish Society objectives. The Account Activity Report (attached) accurately reflected the financial condition of the Society of the 5th Division.

Kudos to National Treasurer George Shoenor for a job well done!

Regards,

Gary Barard
Audit Committee Member

Report of the Treasurer of the Society of the Fifth Division
Account Activity for FY16 (08/01/16-12/31/16)

RECEIPTS

Secretary - Dues (\$2060) + Donations (\$305)	2,365.00
QM Sales	3,335.35
2016 Reunion Income	5,916.60
2017 Reunion Income	125.00
Gain from CDs	74.76
TOTAL	<u>11,816.71</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

Secretary Expenses	(334.91)
QM Expenses	(824.21)
IT Expenses	(1,042.89)
Red Diamond Expenses	(6,518.09)
2016 Reunion Expenses	(1,240.02)
Administrative Expenses	(296.29)
TOTAL	<u>(10,256.41)</u>

RECEIPTS - DISBURSEMENTS for FY16 **1,560.30**

Report of Treasurer - July 31, 2016 (FY15-16)

Cash in Bank	12,528.67
Value of Ladder CDs	40,461.19
Net Worth	<u>52,989.86</u>

Report of Treasurer - December 31, 2016 (FY16)

Cash in Bank	14,014.21
Value of Ladder CDs	40,535.95
Net Worth	<u>54,550.16</u>

Net Worth Difference for FY16 **1,560.30**

George B. Shoener
National Treasurer
SOFD



THE STORY OF 6 JUNE 1970

compiled and edited by

Dr. John E. Thiel

Continued

The Mission - Afternoon

The support team with an engineer and a chemical specialist left Red Devil Camp at about noon. The team was comprised of Ranger Richard "Rick" Polski,



SP4 James Ronald "Ronnie" Stutes from Company A, 7th Engineer Battalion, and SSG Melvin E. Davis⁴ from the 86th Chemical Detachment.



Ranger Terry Roderick helped

fill at least

three duffle bags with brown paper bags of CS powder⁵ from the 55 gallon drums that served as shipping and storage containers for the CS. The bags weighed eight pounds each so the duffels were heavy. They also had along another duffle of about 50 pounds (40 blocks) of

Composition C-4⁶ and probably a full spool (1000 feet) of detonation cord^{7 8} (det cord) as well as other demolition supplies. The intent was to destroy the bunkers and contaminate the soil with CS to inhibit reconstruction of the bunkers.

It was not a fun trip for Stutes. He had been in-country for only 50 days, it



12

⁴ When necessary for clarity, reference will be to Melvin Davis as SSG Davis to distinguish him from Bill Davis.

⁵ CS (chemical formula: C₁₀H₅ClN₂) is a potent frequently used riot control agent. Exposure causes a burning sensation and tearing of the eyes to the extent that a subject cannot keep their eyes open, and a burning irritation of the nose, mouth, and throat mucous membranes causing profuse coughing, mucous nasal discharge, disorientation, and difficulty breathing, partially incapacitating the subject. Such affects made it useful for terrain denial. It is not actually a gas, but a solid at room temperature. The form used on this mission was CS2, a micro-pulverized dry powder form of CS. (It was named for its inventors: Benjamin Corson and Roger Stoughton.)

⁶ Composition C-4, commonly known simply as C-4, is a plastic explosive more powerful than dynamite.

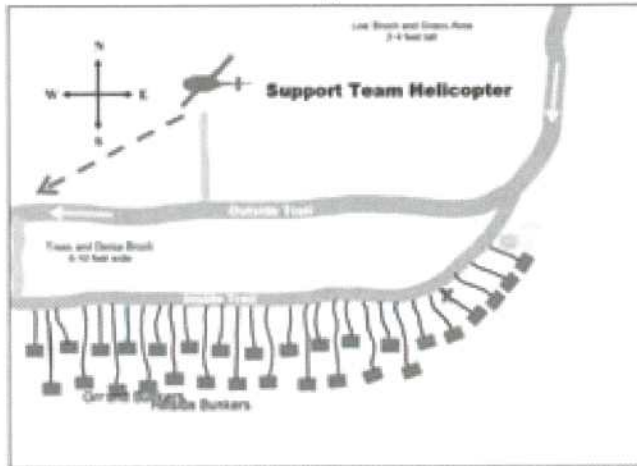
⁷ Detonating cord is a thin, flexible plastic tube usually filled with pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN, pentrite). PETN explodes at a rate of about 4 miles per second so any common length of detonation cord appears to explode instantaneously. It amounts to a high-speed fuze which explodes rather than burns and is suitable for detonating high explosives. The velocity of detonation is sufficient to use it for synchronizing multiple charges to detonate almost simultaneously even if the charges are placed at different distances from the point of initiation.

⁸ 6'3" and over 200 pounds

was his first trip to the field, and there he was on a helicopter with explosives headed into a hot spot in the DMZ with Rangers. On top of that, a big Ranger (Polski) was giving him a hard time about the way he was wearing his grenades. When Polski learned this was Stutes' first time out, he tried to encourage him, reassuring him that he would be fine and do his job. What no one on the mission

knew was that States' younger brother, Kenneth, was killed by a mine outside Da Nang three years earlier.

The support helicopter landed north of the bunker complex on a rise which was the remains of the berm that separated two old rice paddies. An access trail to the bunkers was clearly visible in the tree line, and the support team quickly made



its way to it and set up at the west end of the inside trail where Cassidy provided security. Lutz had blown up a few things before so he was assigned to help the demolition team. SSG Davis had him prepare about a dozen bunkers on the east end of the complex for demolition and Davis and Stutes did the rest. Davis ran a line of detonation cord down the inside trail in front of the bunkers the length of the bunker

complex. Then a length of the detonation cord was tied to the main line with a clove hitch⁹ knot and run into each of the bunkers. In each bunker, a 1^{1/2} pound block of C-4 explosive was wrapped with the detonation cord, and the end of the cord was stuck into the end of the C-4¹⁰.

The men worked as quickly as was prudent; moving through the complex and in and out of the bunkers. Radio messages from the Command and Control helicopter above frequently urged them to move faster as the helicopters had only a limited time on station. Lutz had just finished rigging the detonation cord and C-4 in his assigned bunkers when SSG Davis brought a duffel bag full of the brown paper CS bags down to about the middle of complex. He asked Lutz how many bags he needed. Lutz told him he needed about a dozen bags so Davis told him to take the duffel. Lutz took it down to the east end and placed one bag on top of the C-4 in each bunker dragging the duffel along as he worked back to the west. Lutz recalled how the CS leaked through the bags and was very irritating. It did not help that he tore a couple of bags. It was during that process when one of the two Cobra gunships flying cover over the mission area swooped a little lower than usual and scared an NVA soldier off the outside trail and through the brush to the inside trail. Lutz had just come out of the fourth bunker from the east end when he spotted the interloper (X). Lutz shot him and dragged his body back into a bunker. It is interesting that this was the only NVA soldier on the outside trail since the

1

4 Clove hitch knot:

1 Author's note: that was neat, but unnecessary and slowed the operation.

5

support helicopter arrived. Not many Rangers remember the shot because it was not unusual for them to hear. The NVA often signaled with gun shots.

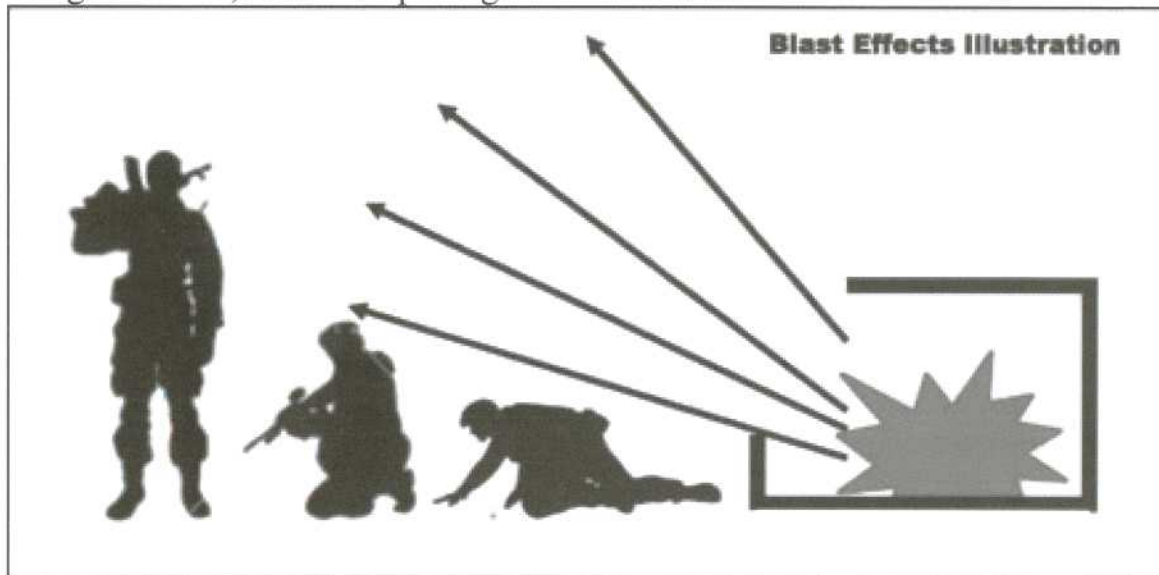
Something unexpected happened at 1445 hours, the time when Lutz' wrist watch stopped. The process of setting the explosives was almost complete so the Rangers were packing and loading their gear preparing to move out to an extraction point. The extraction helicopters were on their way. Stutes, the engineer, was putting excess explosive material including C-4 in the sixth or seventh bunker from the west end of the complex. Lutz had just emerged from placing a bag of CS in the last of his bunkers (it was one of the big ones and he had put two blocks of C-4 in it earlier) when he again encountered SSG Davis. Lutz said something to him, and Davis squatted down and asked him how far along he was. Lutz leaned his weapon against the bunker and told him he was just about done, but he still had to pick up some scrap pieces. During the conversation, Davis took out a cigar and lit it with an electronic cigar lighter¹⁶. The lighter was the size of a pack of cigarettes with a round center that glowed red hot. Davis started to sit down, putting his left hand down to support himself. His left hand still held the cigar lighter and, as soon as the lighter touched the detonation cord, the entire hillside exploded. CPT Luke Ferguson, Papa Company Commanding Officer, was in the C&C helicopter above. He thought the entire team had been lost. The helicopter pilot later said the whole jungle erupted into a large mushroom fireball. It was a massive explosion. There was a fireball, shock wave, smoke, and an incredible amount of debris flying through the air - logs of every dimension, tree limbs, dirt, rocks -- and, of course, CS to make matters much worse. There was enough C-4 in the complex to easily destroy 30 automobiles. The detonation cord by itself was sufficient to fell more than 400 trees each 1 foot in diameter.



Lutz was not happy with Davis smoking during the mission, but he did not have time to say anything about it.

The Aftermath

Everyone on the ground that day was injured in some way. Even Cornelius, who was not in the bunker complex, but guarding the outside trail near the access trail to the bunkers, was knocked down by the blast and pelted with debris from the explosion. He also got a strong dose of the CS. The extent of the physical injuries for those in the bunker complex, generally, was a function of the size of target they presented and how close they were to the blast from a bunker. All of the bunkers in this complex were built such that a person had to step down into them. Consequently, the step blocked part of the blast. Therefore, a person close to a blast and close to the ground would likely incur lesser injuries than a person farther away standing tall. Also, the door opening to the bunkers limited the horizontal



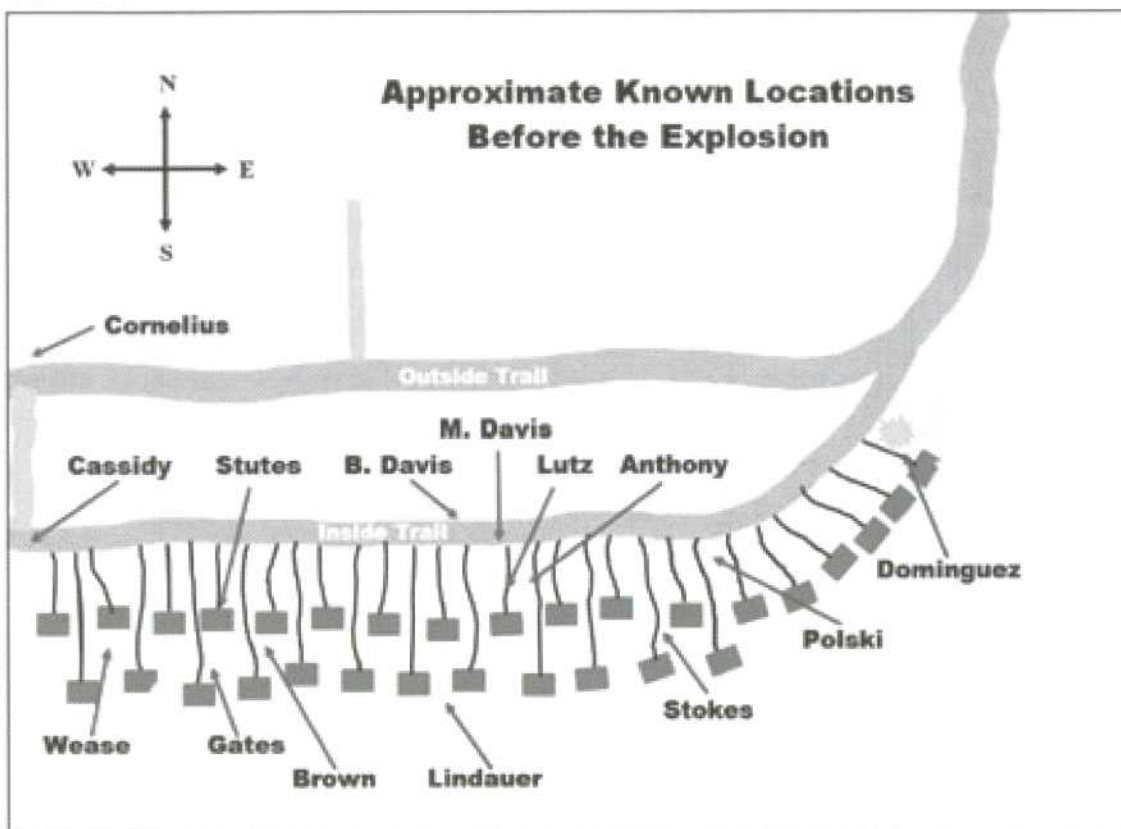
radius of the blasts. Therefore, if one was to the side of a bunker entrance rather than directly in front, one would be much less exposed to the direct effects of the blast although the CS and concussive effects would still be significant.

Wease was in the middle of the bunkers at the west end and had his "brain rattled" [his words]. He did not lose consciousness, but he was disoriented for a short time¹¹. His head was pounding, his ears were ringing, and he could not hear anything. He found his ruck sack, put on his protective mask because of the intensity of the CS, and made his way through the bunkers toward the Command Post (the original defensive perimeter). Cassidy was at the west end of the inside^{11 12} trail in front of a bunker and had just set his rifle against a tree. He was hefting his ruck

¹¹ Without external references, time is difficult to estimate in situations like this. Memories are more densely packed during high-stress situations which usually last only short periods of time. However, in retrospect, the events seem to have taken longer than they actually did because the brain received massive amounts of data to process and that alters the brain's perception of time.

¹² Commonly known as gas masks.

sack which took the direct impact of the explosion, but the blast blew him up into a small tree. He fell out of the tree and crawled back to his rifle which now had a bent magazine and was missing its plastic stock. His legs were badly burned, and he could not walk. His hair was burned off, and his ear drums had burst. Brown's exact location has not been determined, but he was probably in the midst of the bunkers about three-quarters of the way in from the east. He also was saved by his ruck sack which he had hefted in front of him before swinging it onto his back. His face was burned, part of his nose was gone, and he may have lost an eye. Also, his left leg was split open from the thigh on down. Nonetheless, he was able to walk out of the bunker complex. Bill Davis considered himself lucky because although he was only six feet from a bunker he was kneeling down and bent over putting a Claymore mine in his ruck sack. Most of the blast went over him so he incurred "only" a concussion, perforated ear drums, and a strong dose of CS. Polski was about a quarter of the way into the bunker complex. He was wearing a "flak" vest and had his back to the blast which occurred when he was reaching down to pick up his M-79 grenade launcher. The blast threw him about ten feet. Also, a log from a bunker hit him and broke his new Ricoh camera. Otherwise, he was just in the right position that "only" his hair was burned off.



He remembers seeing the bright light first and then hearing the explosion. Like everyone else, he did not hear very well after that. Of course, Polski also got a healthy dose of CS that tormented him until he got back to Quang Tri. His

immediate reaction was to pour his entire Fat Rat¹³ over his head. Dominguez was at the east end of the bunkers in front of the first bunker which was used as a “garbage” bunker for the trash they created while there. He, too, was picking up his ruck sack at the moment of the explosion so it partially shielded him. The ruck sack was shredded, and he was blown into the bomb crater¹⁴ to the north of the bunker where he landed on his back. He had the wind knocked out of him and may have been unconscious for a time.

Lutz had his left hand on the branch line of detonation cord running out of the bunker. His hand was mangled, his ear drums were burst, and his eyes were damaged. When he recovered from the initial shock of the explosion, Lutz tried to grab his rifle with his left hand because he was left-handed. Only when he could not grip it did he realize his left hand was hurt. Anthony was standing by Lutz. The blast knocked him backward five to ten feet and to the ground. SSG Davis had gotten to his feet, and Anthony asked him if he was okay. Davis collapsed before he could answer, and his pulse was too faint to feel. They thought he was dead. Anthony helped Lutz use his green scarf and a stick as a tourniquet on Lutz’ left forearm. Lutz then took his rifle under his right arm, and they went to get help at the Command Post where the team had originally entered the bunker complex through the ravine.

When Polski regained his composure, he started looking for casualties. He found Stokes unhurt and told him to get to the Command Post. Polski also saw Lindauer. He had had “his bell rung”, but was otherwise clean and unmarked. He must have been behind the bunkers. Polski then encountered SSG Davis. Davis was “charred and dirty” from the explosion. He had gotten to his feet, but was not stable even though there were no outward signs of injury. He asked Polski for help, and Polski put one of Davis’ arms over his own shoulder and behind his neck^{15 16} and helped Davis to near where Lutz was on the radio. Davis was still alive then and murmuring, “Help me”. Polski assured him he would be all right and that help was on the way.

Meanwhile, when Dominguez got his wits about him he was bleeding from the nose and ears. He had some superficial scalp wounds and his hair was burned off. Aggravating everything was that he was “on fire” from the CS . He was also blinded by the CS for a short time, but when his vision started to clear he crawled to the top of the bomb crater and sat there. His stomach hurt from the “body punch” the blast delivered, he suffered shortness of breath, and he was hardly able to move, which are typical symptoms of his injury. Dominguez had blood coming out of his

¹³ : quart canteen

¹⁴ B-52’s typically dropped 500 pound bombs so the crater size was roughly 20 feet wide and 5 feet deep.

¹⁵ The one person walking assist carry

¹⁶ Everyone had a protective mask. Wease did use his, but no one else has mentioned using one. Donning a protective mask would not have affected exposed skin and especially the damp areas on the body.

ears, blood running down his forehead, and he just sat there on the edge of the crater wondering what had happened. Then he saw a man come out of the bunker complex [it was probably Bill Davis]. The man was wounded and looked like he was in shock. It seemed to Dominguez that the man just drifted out of the bunker complex and was walking somewhere. Dominguez wanted to get up and help him, but he was too exhausted to stand up. He was still hurting and still burning from the CS. Not long after that, Brown came out of the bunker complex. He was also wounded and also seemed to drift off somewhere. What still stands out in Dominguez' mind is when Lutz came out of the bunkers. He was holding his hand. Dominguez did not know how badly Lutz was hurt, but he saw the blood streaming from his hand and blood covering his uniform. Again, Dominguez tried to stand up, but he could not so he just sat there for a while; his mind still foggy.

At the Command Post, Lutz got on the radio to get help. It was difficult for him to hear because his ears were still ringing from the explosion. Nonetheless, he told the Commanding Officer, CPT Ferguson, that they needed Medevac helicopters, that they had one friendly KIA [SSG Davis] with two wounded [Bill Davis and Lutz], and that, so far, he had seen only himself and three others [Bill Davis, Polski, and Anthony]. Lutz reports that Ferguson kept asking questions, but he could not hear what was being said. Fortunately, Killer 1-3 Team Leader McNulty arrived at the Command Post to talk with Ferguson. McNulty left quickly after getting off the radio to determine what the situation was in the bunker complex. It is not known where McNulty was before the explosion or exactly where he went after talking to Ferguson, but, apparently, he was uninjured. Lutz took the radio and secured the fork in the trail.

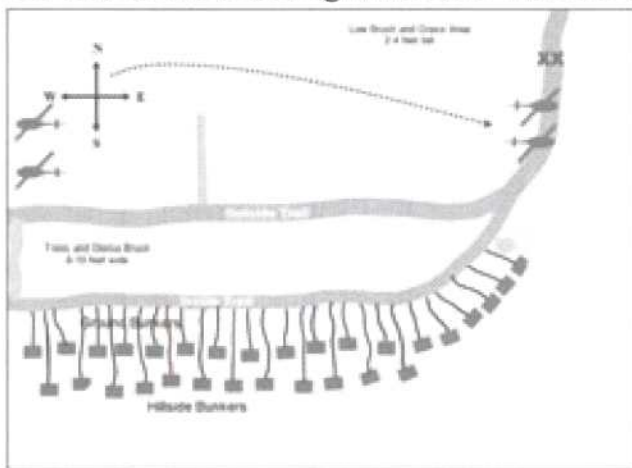
Polski left SSG Davis to rest and headed back toward the bunkers. He asked Lutz if Cassidy had come out yet. Polski and Cassidy were particularly close. Lutz replied that he had not seen Cassidy so Polski went on to look for him. By this time, Lindauer had made his way to the Command Post and was trying to talk on the radio. He was not making much sense, though. Polski told him to get off the radio because he was talking over Lutz' and to leave the channel clear for Lutz. It is thought that Lindauer was on the hill south of the middle of the bunker complex. His uniform was still clean so he was not north of the explosion, but he was^{17 18}

* Killed In Action

* SSG Davis was actually still alive, but Lutz did not know that.

still close enough to suffer the concussion effects. Polski continued up the trail, and Lutz told Anthony to watch the trail where Polski had gone.

Finally, Oleskevich grabbed Dominguez, picked him up, and half-dragged him back to his rifle. By then, there were NVA soldiers “all over the place”. He remembers that another man to the west [Cassidy] was already firing. Dominguez recalls that the NVA soldiers were on the steep hill to the south that the bunkers had been dug into, and were moving down it. He tried shouldering his rifle, but the first time he fired it his face was so swollen that it felt like somebody kicked him there. The rest of his shooting was done with the stock of his rifle under his arm.



Two helicopters flew by and landed on the western side of the old rice paddies. Lutz continued to watch the trail junction and was frequently on the radio until McNulty returned. This time, McNulty saw Lutz’ injury, took over the radio, and got a helicopter to land closer to the Command Post, but it quickly took off. That landing got the attention of two NVA sentries to the north who came running down the trail. Even though Lutz had to hold his

rifle in his right hand and shoot from the hip, he was able to kill them. The helicopter returned a short time later landing about 50 yards from the trail junction with all crew members wearing protective masks. Lutz recalled being amazed that the helicopter had landed that close to the escarpment because its main rotor just barely cleared the brush on top.

When Polski reached Cassidy, Cassidy was laying down suppressing fire at the enemy which was coming through the woods from the west. He had removed the bent magazine from his weapon using a hunting knife he had brought to Vietnam. The receiver extension and action spring were still intact so the weapon worked with a fresh magazine. Polski used the same knife to cut open Cassidy’s pants to bandage his legs. That is when Polski saw the enemy coming down the hill shoulder to shoulder. All he could actually see was green khaki covered legs because of the tree cover, but they were close together and running full speed. He told Cassidy, “We gotta get outta here”, picked him up, and carried him in his arms the 150 yards back to the evacuation helicopter.

Soon (as he recalls) after Dominguez began shooting, he saw “some guys struggling with something” so he went to help them while Oleskevich continued firing. Lutz had dragged SSG Davis to the helicopter. He did so by sticking his left hand down the back of Davis’ shirt and walking around him so the shirt would

twist tight around his wrist. With no grip, however, he could not put Davis on the helicopter so others were trying to get him on board. Dominguez recalled that, after SSG Davis was put on the helicopter, “some guys jumped on and some guys went back”. Therefore, it is likely that Bill Davis, Polski, Anthony, and Dominguez were the ones who put SSG Davis on the helicopter. Bill Davis and Lutz got on the helicopter and the others returned to the bunkers. Lutz was sitting on the floor of the helicopter with his legs hanging outside. He gave Polski his rifle and a thumbs-up. Lutz then turned to Cassidy, smiled at him, and told him, essentially, “Don’t worry, kid. It’ll be all right.” Cassidy wrote years later that, “Jay, was calm and cool headed”. The crew chief told Lutz to get off the edge and farther in to the helicopter, but he did not do so figuring that was going to be his last chance ride in a helicopter like that. One last thing went virtually unnoticed. As the helicopter was lifting off, Anthony held Puddles up so he could be taken aboard¹⁹.

The helicopter left, and Polski returned to the bunkers and retrieved his grenade launcher²⁰ which he had left behind in order to carry Cassidy. He then helped other Rangers with Stutes, the engineer. Killer Team 1-2 Leader Gates was just south of Stutes at the time of the explosion. He was knocked unconscious for a short time, perhaps a minute. After he came to, Gates went to check on Stutes. Apparently, Stutes was in the doorway of a bunker when the detonation occurred because the blast blew him into a tree across from the bunker. More accurately, parts of him were blown into a tree. He was carrying C-4, and the blast would have detonated the C-4 which would have sympathetically detonated his grenades. The combination of the exploding C-4 and exploding grenades account for his extreme injuries. Gates enlisted the help of Cornelius and then Polski to gather up what they could of Stutes. Some of his body parts were recovered from the branches of the tree and others from the ground. The only recognizable pieces were his legs. They put everything they found on a poncho liner. The poncho liner was folded over Stutes’ remains, and his boots held the flap in place.

Dominguez had returned to his rifle and was again firing on NVA soldiers on the hillside. He recalls seeing Cornelius dragging the poncho liner, but Polski and McNulty were also there, and Gates was providing security. Dominguez put his rifle down and went to assist. They carried Stutes in the poncho liner to a second helicopter which had also landed on the trail 50 yards north of the Command Post. That helicopter left with Stutes, and Cornelius accompanied the remains. Yet another helicopter had landed on the trail a little farther north, and Polski ran for that one. He was still on the skid when it took off with door gunners firing, and it climbed rapidly. Polski was totally exhausted and still burning from the

¹⁹ Coordination had been made with the Scout Dog Platoon to meet the helicopter at the 18th Surgical Hospital to pick up Puddles. Scout Dog Platoons have a veterinary technician to treat the dogs. For serious injuries, dogs are evacuated to the Army Animal Clinic at Ton Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon where they are treated by a veterinarian.

²⁰ Rangers had to lay their weapons down, because they did not have slings on their weapons as slings make noise.

CS. That helicopter left with no one besides Polski and the crew on board.

The remaining men on the ground gathered the captured enemy gear that had been collected from the bunkers and put it on the last helicopter when it arrived. Dominguez had gone back to his rifle once again. This time he felt a downdraft which Wease also remembered. It was from a Cobra gunship at near tree top level

⁹⁷
firing on the NVA. The NVA on the hill would retreat into their spider holes when the gunship fired on them and pop back up to fire on the Rangers when the gunship went past. That was the intended effect of the gun run. It took some pressure off of the friendly troops, and, because gunships worked in pairs, the second gunship had clear targets. This gunship “dance” had probably been going on for a while. The gunships had been on station since before the support helicopter arrived, and probably went into action as soon as enemy fire was detected -certainly no later than Lutz’ radio call for help. Maybe it was the concussions, the perforated ear drums, the adrenaline rush, or earlier runs had been higher, but this is the first time the gunships were noticed. Regardless of when the gun runs began, the gunships and the Rangers’ fire and maneuver covered their withdrawal to the fourth and last helicopter which took out the six remaining Rangers and Anthony. The helicopter door gunners were also providing covering fire.

The last Rangers were not safe yet, however. Their extraction helicopter was being fired upon even more intensely than the others had been. Dominguez saw rounds hitting the bird as he got on it, and, despite not being able to hear the rounds hitting the helicopter, the rounds passing by his head were close enough that he remembers hearing the “bee buzz” when they passed. Bud Wease remembers watching the green tracers from an RPD coming up at them from a clump of bushes as they left. Dominguez is sure there was black smoke coming from the engine of the helicopter indicating it had been hit. As the helicopter was pulling away, Dominguez recalls looking down and seeing the gunships firing into the NVA and “cutting them down pretty good”. He then passed out and did not wake up until he was in the hospital.



- A spider hole is a protective, round hole covered by a camouflaged lid from which a soldier can stand and fire a weapon. A spider hole differs from a foxhole in that a foxhole is usually deeper and designed to emphasize cover rather than concealment.
- Russian 7.62mm light machine gun

The Ranger team left the DMZ distributed among four helicopters:

1	2	3	4
M Davis	Stutes	Polski	Lindauer
Lutz	Cornelius		Oleskevich
B Davis			Wease
Cassidy			McNulty
Brown			Dominguez
Stokes			Gates
Puddles			Anthony

1st Helicopter: All reports indicate, and Cassidy swears, that the helicopter nearest the Command Post took SSG Davis, Bill Davis, Lutz, Brown, Cassidy, and Stokes to the 18th Surgical Hospital. Stokes was not injured, but he went anyway.

2nd Helicopter: Cornelius swears that, aside from the crew, he was alone on a helicopter that took him to Alpha 4 at Con Thien. However, Stutes' remains were on that helicopter. Cornelius sat on the edge of the cargo bay floor with his legs hanging outside. Upon arrival at Alpha, he was questioned by CPT Ferguson and SFC Crosby, the operations sergeant.

3rd Helicopter: Polski swears there were no other team members on the helicopter that took him back to the Papa Company helipad.

4th Helicopter: The remaining men and the captured equipment left on this last helicopter. This is the helicopter that is known to have taken enemy fire although the others probably did as well. It also went to Con Thien. It has been reported that McNulty related afterward that the senior officer at the Con Thien base, a Major whose name has been long lost, demanded to know what these helicopters were doing on *his* base. He also demanded to know what was "concealed" in the "package" on one of the helicopters. He threw back the poncho liner, saw Stutes' remains, lost his lunch, and went away.

It took about an hour for the first and third helicopters to get back to Quang Tri. Lutz remembers releasing the pressure on his tourniquet every 15-20 minutes. He did that at least three times. Con Thien, of course, was perhaps twenty-five minutes closer. When Polski was dropped off at the Papa Company helipad, he immediately got his soap and headed for the shower to rid himself of the CS. The wounded were received at the 18th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital at Quang Tri. SSG Davis, the Chemical soldier, whose lips were already turning blue when he was put on the helicopter, died before he could be treated. Cassidy recalls that he

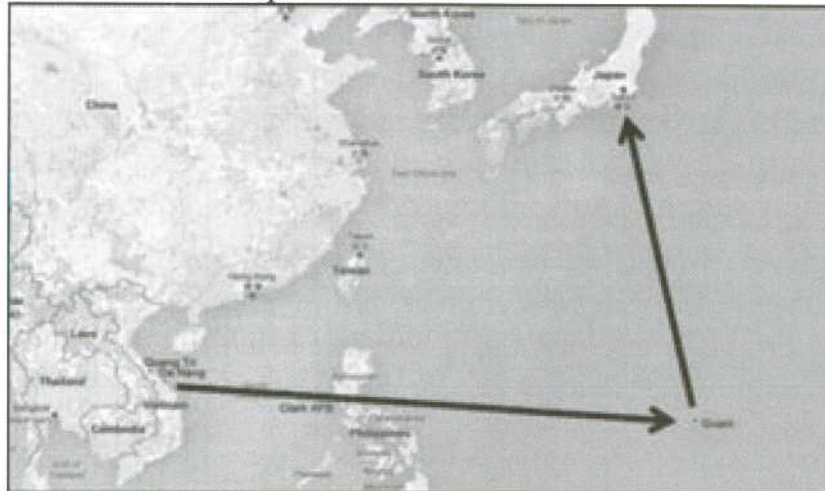
²⁹ Most likely this was the Operations Officer, S3, of 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry.

was already on a gurney in the hospital when SSG Davis was brought in and

watched as the medical personnel worked feverishly to revive him, but to no avail. When his shirt was removed, fingers fell out of it. At the time, Lutz joked that they were his (which they were). SSG Davis had taken only one small fragment, but he had the bad luck of it severing an artery.

Bill Davis stayed at the 18th overnight before returning to light duty with Papa Company. Dominguez was in the hospital for two days before returning to light duty. Lutz remained at the 18th for two days before being transferred to the 95th Evacuation Hospital (SMBL) in Da Nang where he stayed for two or three weeks before being evacuated to a U.S. Army hospital in Japan. During that time, he had two surgeries on his left hand. Those surgeries would normally have been done in Japan, but the damage to his left eye (the good one) prevented him from flying at the altitudes the evacuation plane would reach. It was his good eye because he ended up losing sight in his right eye as well as hearing in his left ear. Cassidy was also evacuated to Japan via the 95th Evacuation Hospital (SMBL) in Da Nang, but he had a short stopover at the Advanced Base Naval Hospital on Guam on the way. Brown also went to the 95th and probably went the same route as Cassidy although Cassidy did not see him again after Da Nang. Lutz does not remember seeing anyone he knew after he left the 18th MASH so he was not on the same ward with Brown and Cassidy.

Papa Company consisted of 58 men. On average, it fielded six combat ready 6-man Ranger teams, but not all at once. Generally, two Ranger teams would be out in the field, two teams would be on "ready alert" to back up teams out on patrol or to become a "reactionary force" as needed, and two teams would be in a stand down mode to resupply and prepare for their next assigned mission. Effectively losing two Ranger teams seriously depleted the Company's manpower and affected its ability to accomplish its mission. Therefore, two Ranger teams from Lima Company, 75th Rangers (which was attached to the 101st Airborne Division) augmented Papa Company's operations for a couple of weeks.



The Cause

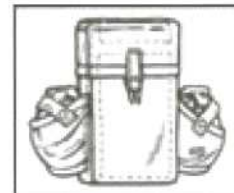
We know that the explosives ignited before the Rangers and support team expected that afternoon in the DMZ. But, what caused the ignition? The dazed men on the ground certainly wondered what happened. CPT Ferguson was questioning Lutz on the radio about what happened. On Alpha 4, he continued to question Cornelius and then McNulty and the others when they arrived. Ferguson went to the 18th Surgical Hospital to get an explanation from Lutz. The day after the incident, there was a general debriefing at Papa Company although at least six men from the mission were missing. Ferguson did send Daniel Hobson (Team Leader from Killer 1-7) to Da Nang to debrief Lutz again. However, no one had an answer for why the explosion went off early.

The official casualty code for Davis and Stutes is A1-G-7 meaning they were ground casualties who died outright by hostile act, not small arms or artillery, but other explosive device. Correspondence from The Adjutant General of the Army describes the device as a booby trap. A booby trap in a bunker would have very likely ignited the det cord if it were tripped. However, there is no reason to believe the bunkers were booby trapped. Not only had the Rangers cleared the bunkers and found no booby traps, but also no team member (including one who was with Papa Company for 18 months) remembers ever encountering a booby trap in a bunker in the DMZ. Each bunker was entered and exited at least three times by a U.S. soldier, and in some cases four or five times. Finally, the scout dog was there. Scout dogs alert on booby traps and mines; they can hear the vibration of trip wires and scent explosives. In light of all the preceding, a booby trap as the cause of the explosion is highly improbable.

SSG Davis' electric cigar lighter is another suspected cause of the blast. It would light cigars, cigarettes, and probably paper and a few other things, but not detonation cord. That is not to say that detonation cord will not burn because it will. Holding it in a flame will ignite it, and it will burn, smoke, and stink, but it will not explode. Detonation cord requires shock force as well as heat to explode. A cigar lighter would not provide enough heat to ignite the detonation cord and certainly no shock force. Therefore, SSG Davis' cigar lighter touching the det cord

at the instant of explosion is coincidental, not causal.

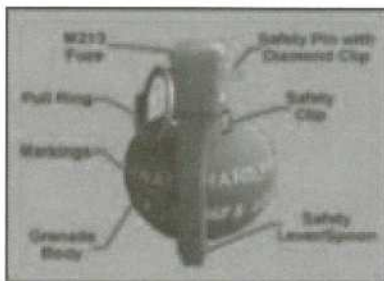
Another possible cause of the explosion is that a fatal error occurred. The engineer, Stutes, had been warned earlier in the day about the security of his four hand grenades. Rangers wore grenades strapped to their ammunition pouches. Stutes had his



³⁰ Other veterans who operated in the DMZ well after this incident recall abandoned bunkers being booby trapped, but these were active bunkers with NVA soldiers in the immediate area.

³¹ Consulting experts for explosives were SGM(R) Mike R. Vining and SGM(R) Michael E. Weber, Ph.D. Each has over 30 years of direct experience with explosives including EOD tours in Vietnam.

attached to his web belt in a manner that Polski found disturbing, and he told him so. Polski recalls that it looked like Stutes had slid the spoons of his grenades over his web belt. Dominguez has said he heard later that Stutes had corrected the problem. Whether he did or not, a common theory among the Rangers is that Stutes “hung” a grenade when he was in a bunker to place left over explosives to be destroyed. In this context, “hung” means that the pull ring became caught on something and was dislodged setting off the grenade. Given that he was carrying C-4, hanging a grenade would have certainly ignited the C-4 and the det cord running into that bunker, and everything connected to it would have exploded instantaneously. However, it does not seem probable that there would have been anything in a bunker or a bunker entrance that would have snagged a pull ring.



Grenades did get hung in Vietnam, but those instances were usually in dense jungle. This was in forest and in heavily used bunkers which were easily accessible by men who were probably also wearing grenades many of which also had pull rings and “spoons”. Finally, in the 1970 time frame, virtually all fragmentation grenades had the secondary safety pin (“jungle clip”) as a secondary safety. Besides, it has been reported that he had corrected the problem making accidental detonation even more unlikely.

Still another cause of the explosion might have been the premature ignition of a blasting cap. Non-electric blasting caps can explode if exposed to high heat or shock. Also, electric blasting caps can be set off by radio signals or static electricity. However, before they can cause any explosion, they usually have to be connected to the explosives. Despite Bill Davis’ assertion that the complex was “wired and ready”, it was not. The blasting cap had not been affixed to the detonation cord. This was confirmed by Ferguson. That is the absolutely last thing that is done, and it is done after friendly troops have left the area. It is a fundamental axiom of explosives work. Stutes would have been the one to set the cap and the last to leave the area. Yet, he was still in the bunker complex with excess explosives. The only other person who would have set the blasting cap was SSG Davis, and he was in the middle of the bunker complex. For the sake of completeness, it is possible, though quite unlikely, that Stutes was carrying a blasting cap on his person, and it was set off sufficiently close to whatever explosive material he was carrying to initiate the explosion. The heat and humidity of the area renders static electricity generated by human activity virtually impossible, and the possibility of him receiving a shock force impact even more remote. Radio frequency ignition has been documented to happen, but the likelihood of such an event is tens of millions to one. A blasting cap mishap is not likely to have been the cause of the explosion.

Another possible cause of the explosion must be explored. A few Rangers recall some conversations after the mission about a plan to set the charges, move everyone away, and blow up the bunker complex by "remote control" via radio from a helicopter. That did not happen, and Ferguson has confirmed that there was no plan to do that. Furthermore, such an arrangement in 1970 would have been experimental at best. The possibility was posed to a group of Vietnam Chemical Corps veterans consisting of men who served in all areas of Vietnam throughout the war, and none had seen or heard of such a thing. Even assuming the explosives were to be set off by remote control, a premature ignition would have required accidental activation of the remote device *and* the set up on the ground to be complete. The likelihood of two mistakes of that magnitude is infinitesimal.

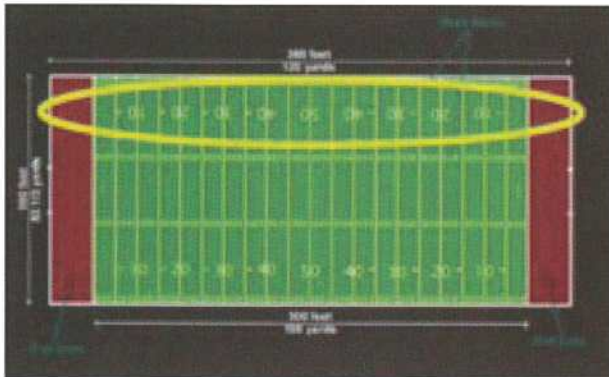
There is circumstantial evidence to support a sixth explanation: The explosion was set off by the enemy. Members of the team were sure they had been detected and were surprised they were not being extracted. If the NVA did not know the Rangers were in their bunker complex already, they certainly figured it out when the helicopter with the support team arrived and the Command & Control helicopter and two Cobra gunships circled overhead like vultures searching for carrion. Before the support team arrived, the Rangers saw NVA in small groups of 2-5 on the trails. The enemy was just walking on the trails with weapons slung. They were walking briskly, but not in a "combat stance". Yet, with all those enemy "travelers", not one wandered into the bunker complex that was a regular stop on the journey south. That seems odd. Then, after the support helicopter arrived, there was no activity on the outside trail save for one soldier who was shot by Lutz after being scared into the inside trail. Perhaps, he was not scared there by a gunship, but there with ill intentions? All the other sightings were of pairs or more, but that guy was alone.

The description of the enemy activity after the explosion indicates a coordinated attack. All the time the team had been in the area prior to the support team arrival, there was enemy activity around them, even under them. They believed they were surrounded, yet there was no hostile attack and enemy activity on the trails ceased. No one remembers hearing chopping to the west after the support team arrived either.

It is not possible to say with certainty that no enemy entered the bunker complex. In fact, one did; the one Lutz shot. Lutz shot him because Lutz was the only one who saw him, and Lutz would not have seen him except it was his misfortune that Lutz was coming out of a bunker at just the right time. The area was not secure; there was no perimeter around the complex. Basically, it was the

³² Cassidy, McNulty, and Oleskevich climbed trees at different times to look for enemy activity, and all had several enemy soldiers pass under them.

length and one-third of the width of a football field. It was simply too large of an area for a dozen Rangers to secure. Also, the terrain was covered with thick brush. The Rangers could not see each other. None of them recall where anyone else was at the time of the explosion. Sneaking into American positions with satchel charges



was a common enemy tactic even when such positions had clear fields of fire and were heavily defended and fortified. Sneaking into this bunker complex would have been easy, and Rangers who were there agreed. A simple grenade would have been enough to ignite the entire complex. Detonation cord explodes at the rate of four miles per second so the initiating explosion would have been indistinguishable from

the larger secondary explosion. Later, back in base camp, somebody said they thought they heard the distinctive “toomph” of a mortar round leaving the tube. If a mortar shell was lobbed into the bunker complex, it would have had to land quite close to a strand of det cord to set off the explosion. That would have been a very lucky shot.

The enemy could not have anticipated an accidental explosion any better than the Rangers. It seems unlikely that the enemy could not have organized itself to attack if it was as surprised by the explosion as the Ranger team was. The enemy could, however, observe the Rangers preparing to leave -- packing their ruck sacks and retrieving their Claymore mines. That would have been a good time to attack: Attention was diverted and defenses were absent. It was not an uncommon tactic for the NVA to wait until a Ranger team was on an extraction helicopter before opening fire. That provided the enemy with a bigger, higher value target with minimum defensive firepower. The problem with that tactic in this situation was that the likely extraction points were not in the fields of fire of the NVA emplacements. It would be an incredible coincidence for a random explosives mishap to occur within seconds or even minutes of an organized infantry attack. Therefore, it is possible that the “premature” explosion was actually a planned enemy attempt to wipe out the entire American force, and, if so, it very nearly succeeded.

Conclusion

What caused the explosion? A definitive answer to that question will never be known. It could have been a booby trap, it could have been a grenade issue, or it could have been a blasting cap issue. Those things did happen in Vietnam. However, given the circumstances, these were very low probability events. A much more likely thing to have happened is an attack by the enemy. After all, when in enemy territory, that is more probable than any other event especially when you are not only in his front yard, but also in his house.



Contributors

Lawrence Anthony
Roger Cassidy
Gerald Cornelius
William Davis²¹
Jose Dominguez
Luke Ferguson
Dave Gates
Jay Lutz
David McNulty*
Richard Polski
Terry Roderick
Bud Wease

²¹via published accounts and retained e-mail messages

In Memoriam



SSG Davis was promoted posthumously to Sergeant First Class. SFC Davis is interred in Mill Creek Cemetery, Saline, Louisiana, and he is remembered on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Panel 09W Line 019.



SP4 Stutes is interred in Calvary Cemetery, Lafayette, Louisiana, and he is remembered on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Panel 09W Line 022.

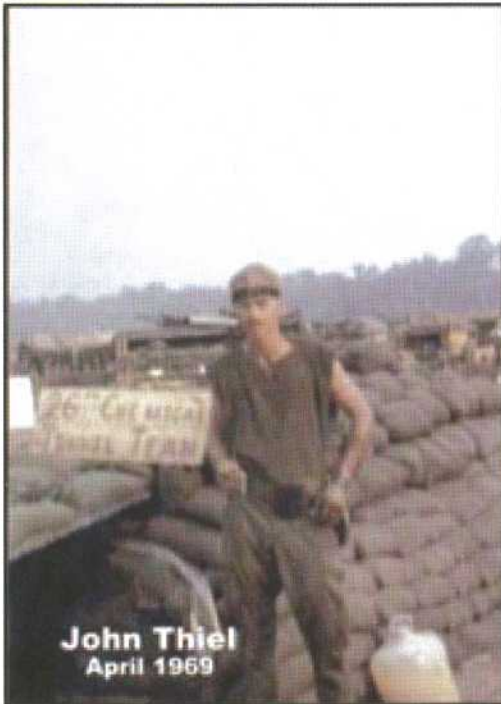


Author's Note

The high explosive/CS combination method of rendering this bunker complex unusable was obsolete technology. I used to contaminate bunkers with CS with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) fulfilling the role of SSG Davis on this mission. I, too, had an assistant with me, but he was another Chemical Corps soldier, not an Engineer.

Before 1969, tunnels and bunkers were destroyed by explosives. Often, the enemy would first be routed using CS. Large bunker complexes would be targeted by CS grenade dispersers or cluster bombs deployed from helicopters. Chemical Corps soldiers were often called upon to clear tunnels utilizing CS grenades and commercial Mity Mite blowers to distribute the agent throughout the tunnels.

From February through June 1969, we contaminated bunkers with CS using only detonation cord to explode the bags. The theory was that contamination



rendered the bunkers unusable while bunkers destroyed by explosives could be easily rebuilt. The detonation cord provided sufficient force to drive the powdered CS into the walls, floor, and roof of a bunker to make it uninhabitable. Without exposure to weather, the CS would stay in the bunker for a considerable time. Scraping the surfaces of a contaminated bunker would be a hellish task, and, if accomplished, scraping would weaken the structure as well as create the problem of disposing of the contaminated material.

From mid-July of 1969 on, bunkers were contaminated with a bunker bomb we made that infantrymen could carry with them. The device was invented by the 26th Chemical Detachment of the 1st Cavalry Division. It consisted of the warhead canister of the 2.75" air to ground rocket filled with CS. The explosive device was two non-electric blasting caps with a 10 second fuze and a fuze lighter attached. One cap would not break the canister open after it was sealed and 3 would flash the CS. The infantry could carry BURB's (bunker utilization restriction bombs) with them and quickly and easily contaminate enemy bunkers without having to wait for chemical specialists to come out to the field. Other Divisions had similar devices so I am surprised the high explosive/CS combination was utilized.

About the Author

John Thiel enlisted in the United States Army in 1967 after failing at his first attempt at college. As a result of misinformation from a recruiter, he found himself in the Chemical, Biological, and Nuclear Warfare Specialist (54E) course at the U.S. Army Chemical Center and School at Fort McClellan. Nonetheless, he was an honor graduate of the class. Subsequently, he served two abbreviated tours in Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). He was severely wounded on both tours, however, each time he was returned to duty and eventually attained the rank of Staff Sergeant. In May 1971, he was retired from the Army for permanent disability as a result of his combat wounds. During his military career he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart (3), Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/silver star, and several letters of commendation. He also served with units awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation (2), the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (3), and the Vietnamese Civil Action Citation.

In August 1971, Mr. Thiel entered Indiana University under the Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Subsequently, he earned the Bachelor of Science (Magna Cum Laude) in 1974, the Master of Business Administration in 1976, and the Doctor of Business Administration in 1978. He also was elected to Beta Gamma Sigma (1973) and Sigma Iota Epsilon (1974) national honoraries. During his academic career, Dr. Thiel taught at Indiana University, the University of Tennessee, Butler University, and Indiana State University. Concurrently, Dr. Thiel conducted a private business consulting practice from which he retired in 1990 to care for his wife who had become an invalid from multiple sclerosis.

It is Dr. Thiel's avocation now to develop and preserve the histories of the units in which he served in Vietnam: the 26th Chemical Detachment and the 184th Chemical Platoon. He has located over four dozen former members of those units and continues to search for more. He has also researched the circumstances of the deaths of each of the thirty-nine Chemical Corps soldiers who died in Vietnam. In the course of these activities, Dr. Thiel has developed a strong interest in the history of the Chemical Corps; particularly its activities in World War II and Vietnam. He is also an active contributor to the Chemical Corps Museum.

Dr. Thiel was admitted to the Chemical Corps Order of the Dragon and the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association in 2012. In 2013, he was elected to the U.S. Army Chemical Corps Hall of Fame as its 70th member.

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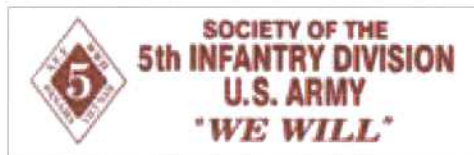


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 "WE WILL" THE SOCIETY OF THE FIFTH DIVISION UNITED STATES ARMY	MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL APPLICATION	<small>PLEASE PRINT FULL NAME AND ADDRESS CLEARLY.</small>
	<p>Having served honorably with the Fifth Infantry Division, I wish to:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> become a member in</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> renew my membership in</p> <p>... the Society of the Fifth Division as:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a full member</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> an Associate Member</p> <p>and herewith submit my annual dues of \$15.00, to include a year's subscription to the <i>Red Diamond Magazine</i>.</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____</p> <p>State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Email _____</p> <p>I served in _____ <small>Co, Bty, Trp / Battalion / Regiment / Brigade</small> <input type="checkbox"/> WW-II <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam <input type="checkbox"/> Panama</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p>\$ _____ Gift to the Society.</p> <p>Make checks payable to: Society of the Fifth Division</p> <p>Send to: Secretary: John Estrada Society of the Fifth Division P.O. Box 5764 Oroville, CA 95966-8823</p>

The dues for membership in the Society are \$15.00 for annual membership. Any member wishing to become a LIFE member may do so by paying the following one-time dues: age less than 61, \$150.00; age 61-69, \$75.00; age over 70, \$50.00. All LIFE members are subject to any special assessments declared by the Executive Board or adopted at any meeting.